Anton Chekhov

Greatest Short Stories

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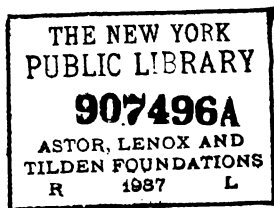
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THE QUEEN OF SPADES

BY ALEXANDER SERGEIEVITCH POUSHKIN

THE QUEEN OF SPADES

BY ALEXANDER SERGEIEVITCH POUSHKIN

AT the house of Naroumov, a cavalry officer, the long winter night had been passed in gambling. At five in the morning breakfast was served to the weary players. The winners ate with relish; the losers, on the contrary, pushed back their plates and sat brooding gloomily. Under the influence of the good wine, however, the conversation then became general.

"Well, Sourine?" said the host inquiringly.

"Oh, I lost as usual. My luck is abominable. No matter how cool I keep, I never win."

"How is it, Herman, that you never touch a card?" remarked one of the men, addressing a young officer of the Engineering Corps. "Here you are with the rest of us at five o'clock in the morning, and you have neither played nor bet all night."

"Play interests me greatly," replied the person addressed, "but I hardly care to sacrifice the necessaries of life for uncertain superfluities."

"Herman is a German, therefore economical; that explains it," said Tomsky. "But the person

I can't quite understand is my grandmother, the Countess Anna Fedorovna."

"Why?" inquired a chorus of voices.

"I can't understand why my grandmother never gambles."

"I don't see anything very striking in the fact that a woman of eighty refuses to gamble," objected Naroumov.

"Have you never heard her story?"

"No."

"Well, then, listen to it. To begin with, sixty years ago my grandmother went to Paris, where she was all the fashion. People crowded each other in the streets to get a chance to see the 'Muscovite Venus,' as she was called. All the great ladies played faro, then. On one occasion, while playing with the Duke of Orleans, she lost an enormous sum. She told her husband of the debt, but he refused outright to pay it. Nothing could induce him to change his mind on the subject, and grandmother was at her wits' ends. Finally, she remembered a friend of hers, Count Saint-Germain. You must have heard of him, as many wonderful stories have been told about him. He is said to have discovered the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone, and many other equally marvelous things. He had money at his disposal, and my grandmother knew it. She sent him a note asking him to come to see her. He obeyed her summons and found her in great distress. She painted the cruelty of her husband in the

darkest colors, and ended by telling the Count that she depended upon his friendship and generosity.

" 'I could lend you the money,' replied the Count, after a moment of thoughtfulness, 'but I know that you would not enjoy a moment's rest until you had returned it; it would only add to your embarrassment. There is another way of freeing yourself.'

" 'But I have no money at all,' insisted my grandmother.

" 'There is no need of money. Listen to me.'

"The Count then told her a secret which any of us would give a good deal to know."

The young gamesters were all attention. Tomsky lit his pipe, took a few whiffs, then continued:

"The next evening, grandmother appeared at Versailles at the Queen's gaming-table. The Duke of Orleans was the dealer. Grandmother made some excuse for not having brought any money, and began to punt. She chose three cards in succession, again and again, winning every time, and was soon out of debt."

"A fable," remarked Herman; "perhaps the cards were marked."

"I hardly think so," replied Tomsky, with an air of importance.

"So you have a grandmother who knows three winning cards, and you haven't found out the magic secret."

"I must say I have not. She had four sons, one of them being my father, all of whom are devoted to play; she never told the secret to one of them. But my uncle told me this much, on his word of honor. Tchaplitzky, who died in poverty after having squandered millions, lost at one time, at play, nearly three hundred thousand rubles. He was desperate and grandmother took pity on him. She told him the three cards, making him swear never to use them again. He returned to the game, staked fifty thousand rubles on each card, and came out ahead, after paying his debts."

As day was dawning the party now broke up, each one draining his glass and taking his leave.

. . . .

The Countess Anna Fedorovna was seated before her mirror in her dressing-room. Three women were assisting at her toilet. The old Countess no longer made the slightest pretensions to beauty, but she still clung to all the habits of her youth, and spent as much time at her toilet as she had done sixty years before. At the window a young girl, her ward, sat at her needlework.

"Good afternoon, grandmother," cried a young officer, who had just entered the room. "I have come to ask a favor of you."

"What, Pavel?"

"I want to be allowed to present one of my

friends to you, and to take you to the ball on Tuesday night."

"Take me to the ball and present him to me there."

After a few more remarks the officer walked up to the window where Lisaveta Ivanovna sat.

"Whom do you wish to present?" asked the girl.

"Naroumov; do you know him?"

"No; is he a soldier?"

"Yes."

"An engineer?"

"No; why do you ask?"

The girl smiled and made no reply.

Pavel Tomsky took his leave, and, left to herself, Lisaveta glanced out of the window. Soon, a young officer appeared at the corner of the street; the girl blushed and bent her head low over her canvas.

This appearance of the officer had become a daily occurrence. The man was totally unknown to her, and as she was not accustomed to coquetting with the soldiers she saw on the street, she hardly knew how to explain his presence. His persistence finally roused an interest entirely strange to her. One day, she even ventured to smile upon her admirer, for such he seemed to be.

The reader need hardly be told that the officer was no other than Herman, the would-be gambler, whose imagination had been strongly ex-

cited by the story told by Tomsky of the three magic cards.

"Ah," he thought, "if the old Countess would only reveal the secret to me. Why not try to win her good-will and appeal to her sympathy?"

With this idea in mind, he took up his daily station before the house, watching the pretty face at the window, and trusting to fate to bring about the desired acquaintance.

One day, as Lisaveta was standing on the pavement about to enter the carriage after the Countess, she felt herself jostled and a note was thrust into her hand. Turning, she saw the young officer at her elbow. As quick as thought, she put the note in her glove and entered the carriage. On her return from the drive, she hastened to her chamber to read the missive, in a state of excitement mingled with fear. It was a tender and respectful declaration of affection, copied word for word from a German novel. Of this fact, Lisa was, of course, ignorant.

The young girl was much impressed by the missive, but she felt that the writer must not be encouraged. She therefore wrote a few lines of explanation and, at the first opportunity, dropped it, with the letter, out of the window. The officer hastily crossed the street, picked up the papers and entered a shop to read them.

In no wise daunted by this rebuff, he found the opportunity to send her another note in a few days. He received no reply, but, evidently

understanding the female heart, he presevered, begging for an interview. He was rewarded at last by the following:

"To-night we go to the ambassador's ball. We shall remain until two o'clock. I can arrange for a meeting in this way. After our departure, the servants will probably all go out, or go to sleep. At half-past eleven enter the vestibule boldly, and if you see any one, inquire for the Countess; if not, ascend the stairs, turn to the left and go on until you come to a door, which opens into her bedchamber. Enter this room and behind a screen you will find another door leading to a corridor; from this a spiral staircase leads to my sitting-room. I shall expect to find you there on my return."

Herman trembled like a leaf as the appointed hour drew near. He obeyed instructions fully, and, as he met no one, he reached the old lady's bedchamber without difficulty. Instead of going out of the small door behind the screen, however, he concealed himself in a closet to await the return of the old Countess.

The hours dragged slowly by; at last he heard the sound of wheels. Immediately lamps were lighted and servants began moving about. Finally the old woman tottered into the room, completely exhausted. Her women removed her wraps and proceeded to get her in readiness for the night. Herman watched the proceedings with a curiosity not unmingled with superstitious

fear. When at last she was attired in cap and gown, the old woman looked less uncanny than when she wore her ball-dress of blue brocade.

She sat down in an easy chair beside a table, as she was in the habit of doing before retiring, and her women withdrew. As the old lady sat swaying to and fro, seemingly oblivious to her surroundings, Herman crept out of his hiding-place.

At the slight noise the old woman opened her eyes, and gazed at the intruder with a half-dazed expression.

"Have no fear, I beg of you," said Herman, in a calm voice. "I have not come to harm you, but to ask a favor of you instead."

The Countess looked at him in silence, seemingly without comprehending him. Herman thought she might be deaf, so he put his lips close to her ear and repeated his remark. The listener remained perfectly mute.

"You could make my fortune without its costing you anything," pleaded the young man; "only tell me the three cards which are sure to win, and—"

Herman paused as the old woman opened her lips as if about to speak.

"It was only a jest; I swear to you, it was only a jest," came from the withered lips.

"There was no jesting about it. Remember Tchaplitzky, who, thanks to you, was able to pay his debts."

An expression of interior agitation passed over the face of the old woman; then she relapsed into her former apathy.

"Will you tell me the names of the magic cards, or not?" asked Herman after a pause.

There was no reply.

The young man then drew a pistol from his pocket, exclaiming: "You old witch, I'll force you to tell me!"

At the sight of the weapon the Countess gave a second sign of life. She threw back her head and put out her hands as if to protect herself; then they dropped and she sat motionless.

Herman grasped her arm roughly, and was about to renew his threats, when he saw that she was dead!

. . . .

Seated in her room, still in her ball-dress, Lisaveta gave herself up to her reflections. She had expected to find the young officer there, but she felt relieved to see that he was not.

Strangely enough, that very night at the ball, Tomsky had rallied her about her preference for the young officer, assuring her that he knew more than she supposed he did.

"Of whom are you speaking?" she had asked in alarm, fearing her adventure had been discovered.

"Of the remarkable man," was the reply. "His name is Herman."

Lisa made no reply.

"This Herman," continued Tomsky, "is a romantic character; he has the profile of a Napoleon and the heart of a Mephistopheles. It is said he has at least three crimes on his conscience. But how pale you are."

"It is only a slight headache. But why do you talk to me of this Herman?"

"Because I believe he has serious intentions concerning you."

"Where has he seen me?"

"At church, perhaps, or on the street."

The conversation was interrupted at this point, to the great regret of the young girl. The words of Tomsky made a deep impression upon her, and she realized how imprudently she had acted. She was thinking of all this and a great deal more when the door of her apartment suddenly opened, and Herman stood before her. She drew back at sight of him, trembling violently.

"Where have you been?" she asked in a frightened whisper.

"In the bedchamber of the Countess. She is dead," was the calm reply.

"My God! What are you saying?" cried the girl.

"Furthermore, I believe that I was the cause of her death."

The words of Tomsky flashed through Lisa's mind.

Herman sat down and told her all. She listened with a feeling of terror and disgust. So

those passionate letters, that audacious pursuit were not the result of tenderness and love. It was money that he desired. The poor girl felt that she had in a sense been an accomplice in the death of her benefactress. She began to weep bitterly. Herman regarded her in silence.

"You are a monster!" exclaimed Lisa, drying her eyes.

"I didn't intend to kill her; the pistol was not even loaded.

"How are you going to get out of the house?" inquired Lisa. "It is nearly daylight. I intended to show you the way to a secret staircase, while the Countess was asleep, as we would have to cross her chamber. Now I am afraid to do so."

"Direct me, and I will find the way alone," replied Herman.

She gave him minute instructions and a key with which to open the street door. The young man pressed the cold, inert hand, then went out.

The death of the Countess had surprised no one, as it had long been expected. Her funeral was attended by every one of note in the vicinity. Herman mingled with the throng without attracting any especial attention. After all the friends had taken their last look at the dead face, the young man approached the bier. He prostrated himself on the cold floor, and remained motionless for a long time. He rose at last with

a face almost as pale as that of the corpse itself, and went up the steps to look into the casket. As he looked down it seemed to him that the rigid face returned his glance mockingly, closing one eye. He turned abruptly away, made a false step, and fell to the floor. He was picked up, and, at the same moment, Lisaveta was carried out in a faint.

Herman did not recover his usual composure during the entire day. He dined alone at an out-of-the-way restaurant, and drank a great deal, in the hope of stifling his emotion. The wine only served to stimulate his imagination. He returned home and threw himself down on his bed without undressing.

During the night he awoke with a start; the moon shone into his chamber, making everything plainly visible. Some one looked in at the window, then quickly disappeared. He paid no attention to this, but soon he heard the vestibule door open. He thought it was his orderly, returning late, drunk as usual. The step was an unfamiliar one, and he heard the shuffling sound of loose slippers.

The door of his room opened, and a woman in white entered. She came close to the bed, and the terrified man recognized the Countess.

"I have come to you against my will," she said abruptly; "but I was commanded to grant your request. The tray, seven, and ace in succession are the magic cards. Twenty-four hours

must elapse between the use of each card, and after the three have been used you must never play again."

The fantom then turned and walked away. Herman heard the outside door close, and again saw the form pass the window.

He rose and went out into the hall, where his orderly lay asleep on the floor. The door was closed. Finding no trace of a visitor, he returned to his room, lit his candle, and wrote down what he had just heard.

Two fixed ideas cannot exist in the brain at the same time any more than two bodies can occupy the same point in space. The tray, seven, and ace soon chased away the thoughts of the dead woman, and all other thoughts from the brain of the young officer. All his ideas merged into a single one: how to turn to advantage the secret paid for so dearly. He even thought of resigning his commission and going to Paris to force a fortune from conquered fate. Chance rescued him from his embarrassment.

Tchekalinsky, a man who had passed his whole life at cards, opened a club at St. Petersburg. His long experience secured for him the confidence of his companions, and his hospitality and genial humor conciliated society.

The gilded youth flocked around him, neglecting society, preferring the charms of faro to those of their sweethearts. Naroumov invited Herman to accompany him to the club, and the

young man accepted the invitation only too willingly.

The two officers found the apartments full. Generals and statesmen played whist; young men lounged on sofas, eating ices or smoking. In the principal salon stood a long table, at which about twenty men sat playing faro, the host of the establishment being the banker.

He was a man of about sixty, gray-haired and respectable. His ruddy face shone with genial humor; his eyes sparkled and a constant smile hovered around his lips.

Naroumov presented Herman. The host gave him a cordial handshake, begged him not to stand upon ceremony, and returned to his dealing. More than thirty cards were already on the table. Tchekalinsky paused after each coup, to allow the punters time to recognize their gains or losses, politely answering all questions and constantly smiling.

After the deal was over, the cards were shuffled and the game began again.

"Permit me to choose a card," said Herman, stretching out his hand over the head of a portly gentleman, to reach a livret. The banker bowed without replying.

Herman chose a card, and wrote the amount of his stake upon it with a piece of chalk.

"How much is that?" asked the banker; "excuse me, sir, but I do not see well."

"Forty thousand rubles," said Herman coolly.

All eyes were instantly turned upon the speaker.

"He has lost his wits," thought Naroumov.

"Allow me to observe," said Tchekalinsky, with his eternal smile, "that your stake is excessive."

"What of it?" replied Herman, nettled. "Do you accept it or not?"

The banker nodded in assent. "I have only to remind you that the cash will be necessary; of course your word is good, but in order to keep the confidence of my patrons, I prefer the ready money."

Herman took a bank-check from his pocket and handed it to his host. The latter examined it attentively, then laid it on the card chosen.

He began dealing: to the right, a nine; to the left, a tray.

"The tray wins," said Herman, showing the card he held—a tray.

A murmur ran through the crowd. Tchekalinsky frowned for a second only, then his smile returned. He took a roll of bank-bills from his pocket and counted out the required sum. Herman received it and at once left the table.

The next evening saw him at the place again. Every one eyed him curiously, and Tchekalinsky greeted him cordially.

He selected his card and placed upon it his

fresh stake. The banker began dealing: to the right, a nine; to the left, a seven.

Herman then showed his card—a seven spot. The onlookers exclaimed, and the host was visibly disturbed. He counted out ninety-four-thousand rubles and passed them to Herman, who accepted them without showing the least surprise, and at once withdrew.

The following evening he went again. His appearance was the signal for the cessation of all occupation, every one being eager to watch the developments of events. He selected his card—an ace.

The dealing began: to the right, a queen; to the left, an ace.

"The ace wins," remarked Herman, turning up his card without glancing at it.

"Your queen is killed," remarked Tchekalinsky quietly.

Herman trembled; looking down, he saw, not the ace he had selected, but the queen of spades. He could scarcely believe his eyes. It seemed impossible that he could have made such a mistake. As he stared at the card it seemed to him that the queen winked one eye at him mockingly.

"The old woman!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

The croupier raked in the money while he looked on in stupid terror. When he left the table, all made way for him to pass; the cards were shuffled, and the gambling went on.

Herman became a lunatic. He was confined at the hospital at Oboukov, where he spoke to no one, but kept constantly murmuring in a monotonous tone: "The tray, seven, ace! The tray, seven, queen!"

THE UNKNOWN MASTERPIECE

BY HONORÉ DE BALZAC

THE UNKNOWN MASTERPIECE

TO A LORD

BY HONORÉ DE BALZAC

1845

I

GILLETTE

ON a cold December morning in the year 1612, a young man, whose clothing was somewhat of the thinnest, was walking to and fro before a gateway in the Rue des Grands-Augustins in Paris. He went up and down the street before this house with the irresolution of a gallant who dares not venture into the presence of the mistress whom he loves for the first time, easy of access though she may be; but after a sufficiently long interval of hesitation, he at last crossed the threshold and inquired of an old woman, who was sweeping out a large room on the ground floor, whether Master Porbus was within. Receiving a reply in the affirmative, the young man went slowly up the staircase, like a gentleman but newly come to court, and doubtful as to his reception by the king. He came to a stand once more on the landing at the head of the stairs, and again he hesitated before raising

his hand to the grotesque knocker on the door of the studio, where doubtless the painter was at work—Master Porbus, sometime painter in ordinary to Henri IV till Mary de' Medici took Rubens into favor.

The young man felt deeply stirred by an emotion that must thrill the hearts of all great artists when, in the pride of their youth and their first love of art, they come into the presence of a master or stand before a masterpiece. For all human sentiments there is a time of early blossoming, a day of generous enthusiasm that gradually fades until nothing is left of happiness but a memory, and glory is known for a delusion. Of all these delicate and short-lived emotions, none so resemble love as the passion of a young artist for his art, as he is about to enter on the blissful martyrdom of his career of glory and disaster, of vague expectations and real disappointments.

Those who have missed this experience in the early days of light purses; who have not, in the dawn of their genius, stood in the presence of a master and felt the throbbing of their hearts, will always carry in their inmost souls a chord that has never been touched, and in their work an indefinable quality will be lacking, a something in the stroke of the brush, a mysterious element that we call poetry. The swaggerers, so puffed up by self-conceit that they are confident over
soon of their success, can never be taken for men

of talent save by fools. From this point of view, if youthful modesty is the measure of youthful genius, the stranger on the staircase might be allowed to have something in him; for he seemed to possess the indescribable diffidence, the early timidity that artists are bound to lose in the course of a great career, even as pretty women lose it as they make progress in the arts of coquetry. Self-distrust vanishes as triumph succeeds to triumph, and modesty is, perhaps, distrust of itself.

The poor neophyte was so overcome by the consciousness of his own presumption and insignificance, that it began to look as if he was hardly likely to penetrate into the studio of the painter, to whom we owe the wonderful portrait of Henri IV. But fate was propitious; an old man came up the staircase. From the quaint costume of this newcomer, his collar of magnificent lace, and a certain serene gravity in his bearing, the first arrival thought that this personage must be either a patron or a friend of the court painter. He stood aside therefore upon the landing to allow the visitor to pass, scrutinizing him curiously the while. Perhaps he might hope to find the good nature of an artist or to receive the good offices of an amateur not unfriendly to the arts; but besides an almost diabolical expression in the face that met his gaze, there was that indescribable something which has an irresistible attraction for artists.

Picture that face. A bald high forehead and rugged jutting brows above a small flat nose turned up at the end, as in the portraits of Socrates and Rabelais; deep lines about the mocking mouth; a short chin, carried proudly, covered with a grizzled pointed beard; sea-green eyes that age might seem to have dimmed were it not for the contrast between the iris and the surrounding mother-of-pearl tints, so that it seemed as if under the stress of anger or enthusiasm there would be a magnetic power to quell or kindle in their glances. The face was withered beyond wont by the fatigue of years, yet it seemed aged still more by the thoughts that had worn away both soul and body. There were no lashes to the deep-set eyes, and scarcely a trace of the arching lines of the eyebrows above them. Set this head on a spare and feeble frame, place it in a frame of lace wrought like an engraved silver fish-slice, imagine a heavy gold chain over the old man's black doublet, and you will have some dim idea of this strange personage, who seemed still more fantastic in the sombre twilight of the staircase. One of Rembrandt's portraits might have stepped down from its frame to walk in an appropriate atmosphere of gloom, such as the great painter loved. The older man gave the younger a shrewd glance, and knocked thrice at the door. It was opened by a man of forty or thereabout, who seemed to be an invalid.

"Good day, Master."

Porbus bowed respectfully, and held the door open for the younger man to enter, thinking that the latter accompanied his visitor; and when he saw that the neophyte stood a while as if spell-bound, feeling, as every artist-nature must feel, the fascinating influence of the first sight of a studio in which the material processes of art are revealed, Porbus troubled himself no more about this second comer.

All the light in the studio came from a window in the roof, and was concentrated upon an easel, where a canvas stood untouched as yet save for three or four outlines in chalk. The daylight scarcely reached the remoter angles and corners of the vast room; they were as dark as night, but the silver ornamented breastplate of a Reiter's corselet, that hung upon the wall, attracted a stray gleam to its dim abiding-place among the brown shadows; or a shaft of light shot across the carved and glistening surface of an antique sideboard covered with curious silver-plate, or struck out a line of glittering dots among the raised threads of the golden warp of some old brocaded curtains, where the lines of the stiff, heavy folds were broken, as the stuff had been flung carelessly down to serve as a model.

Plaster *écorchés* stood about the room; and here and there, on shelves and tables, lay fragments of classical sculpture—torsos of antique goddesses, worn smooth as though all the years

of the centuries that had passed over them had been lovers' kisses. The walls were covered, from floor to ceiling, with countless sketches in charcoal, red chalk, or pen and ink. Amid the litter and confusion of color boxes, overturned stools, flasks of oil, and essences, there was just room to move so as to reach the illuminated circular space where the easel stood. The light from the window in the roof fell full upon Porbus's pale face and on the ivory-tinted forehead of his strange visitor. But in another moment the younger man heeded nothing but a picture that had already become famous even in those stormy days of political and religious revolution, a picture that a few of the zealous worshipers, who have so often kept the sacred fire of art alive in evil days, were wont to go on pilgrimage to see. The beautiful panel represented a Saint Mary of Egypt about to pay her passage across the seas. It was a masterpiece destined for Mary de' Medici, who sold it in later years of poverty.

"I like your saint," the old man remarked, addressing Porbus. "I would give you ten golden crowns for her over and above the price the Queen is paying; but as for putting a spoke in that wheel—the devil take it!"

"It is good then?"

"Hey! hey!" said the old man; "good, say you?— Yes and no. Your good woman is not badly done, but she is not alive. You artists fancy that when a figure is correctly drawn, and

everything in its place according to the rules of anatomy, there is nothing more to be done. You make up the flesh tints beforehand on your palettes according to your formulæ, and fill in the outlines with due care that one side of the face shall be darker than the other; and because you look from time to time at a naked woman who stands on the platform before you, you fondly imagine that you have copied nature, think yourselves to be painters, believe that you have wrested His secret from God. Pshaw! You may know your syntax thoroughly and make no blunders in your grammar, but it takes that and something more to make a great poet. Look at your saint, Porbus! At a first glance she is admirable; look at her again, and you see at once that she is glued to the background, and that you could not walk round her. She is a silhouette that turns but one side of her face to all beholders, a figure cut out of canvas, an image with no power to move nor change her position. I feel as if there were no air between that arm and the background, no space, no sense of distance in your canvas. The perspective is perfectly correct, the strength of the coloring is accurately diminished with the distance; but, in spite of these praiseworthy efforts, I could never bring myself to believe that the warm breath of life comes and goes in that beautiful body. It seems to me that if I laid my hand on the firm, rounded throat, it would be cold as marble to the touch.

No, my friend, the blood does not flow beneath that ivory skin, the tide of life does not flush those delicate fibres, the purple veins that trace a network beneath the transparent amber of her brow and breast. Here the pulse seems to beat, there it is motionless, life and death are at strife in every detail; here you see a woman, there a statue, there again a corpse. Your creation is incomplete. You had only power to breathe a portion of your soul into your beloved work. The fire of Prometheus died out again and again in your hands; many a spot in your picture has not been touched by the divine flame."

"But how is it, dear master?" Porbus asked respectfully, while the young man with difficulty repressed his strong desire to beat the critic.

"Ah!" said the old man, "it is this! You have halted between two manners. You have hesitated between drawing and color, between the dogged attention to detail, the stiff precision of the German masters and the dazzling glow, the joyous exuberance of Italian painters. You have set yourself to imitate Hans Holbein and Titian, Albrecht Dürer and Paul Veronese in a single picture. A magnificent ambition truly, but what has come of it? Your work has neither the severe charm of a dry execution nor the magical illusion of Italian *chiaroscuro*. Titian's rich golden coloring poured into Albrecht Dürer's austere outlines has shattered them, like molten bronze bursting through the mold that is not

strong enough to hold it. In other places the outlines have held firm, imprisoning and obscuring the magnificent, glowing flood of Venetian color. The drawing of the face is not perfect, the coloring is not perfect; traces of that unlucky indecision are to be seen everywhere. Unless you felt strong enough to fuse the two opposed manners in the fire of your own genius, you should have cast in your lot boldly with the one or the other, and so have obtained the unity which simulates one of the conditions of life itself. Your work is only true in the centres; your outlines are false, they project nothing, there is no hint of anything behind them. There is truth here," said the old man, pointing to the breast of the Saint, "and again here," he went on, indicating the rounded shoulder. "But there," once more returning to the column of the throat, "everything is false. Let us go no further into detail; you would be disheartened."

The old man sat down on a stool, and remained a while without speaking, with his face buried in his hands.

"Yet I studied that throat from the life, dear master," Porbus began; "it happens sometimes, for our misfortune, that real effects in nature look improbable when transferred to canvas—"

"The aim of art is not to copy nature, but to express it. You are not a servile copyist, but a poet!" cried the old man sharply, cutting Porbus

short with an imperious gesture. "Otherwise a sculptor might make a plaster cast of a living woman and save himself all further trouble. Well, try to make a cast of your mistress's hand, and set up the thing before you. You will see a monstrosity, a dead mass, bearing no resemblance to the living hand; you would be compelled to have recourse to the chisel of a sculptor who, without making an exact copy, would represent for you its movement and its life. We must detect the spirit, the informing soul in the appearances of things and beings. Effects! What are effects but the accidents of life, not life itself? A hand, since I have taken that example, is not only a part of a body, it is the expression and extension of a thought that must be grasped and rendered. Neither painter nor poet nor sculptor may separate the effect from the cause, which are inevitably contained the one in the other. There begins the real struggle! Many a painter achieves success instinctively, unconscious of the task that is set before art. You draw a woman, yet you do not see her! Not so do you succeed in wresting Nature's secrets from her! You are reproducing mechanically the model that you copied in your master's studio. You do not penetrate far enough into the inmost secrets of the mystery of form; you do not seek with love enough and perseverance enough after the form that baffles and eludes you. Beauty is a thing severe and unapproachable, never to be won by

a languid lover. You must lie in wait for her coming and take her unawares, press her hard and clasp her in a tight embrace, and force her to yield. Form is a Proteus more intangible and more manifold than the Proteus of the legend; compelled, only after long wrestling, to stand forth manifest in his true aspect. Some of you are satisfied with the first shape, or at most by the second or the third that appears. Not thus wrestle the victors, the unvanquished painters who never suffer themselves to be deluded by all those treacherous shadow-shapes; they persevere till Nature at the last stands bare to their gaze, and her very soul is revealed.

"In this manner worked Rafael," said the old man, taking off his cap to express his reverence for the King of Art. "His transcendent greatness came of the intimate sense that, in him, seems as if it would shatter external form. Form in his figures (as with us) is a symbol, a means of communicating sensations, ideas, the vast imaginings of a poet. Every face is a whole world. The subject of the portrait appeared for him bathed in the light of a divine vision; it was revealed by an inner voice, the finger of God laid bare the sources of expression in the past of a whole life.

"You clothe your women in fair raiment of flesh, in gracious veiling of hair; but where is the blood, the source of passion and of calm, the cause of the particular effect? Why, this brown

Egyptian of yours, my good Porbus, is a colorless creature! These figures that you set before us are painted bloodless fantoms; and you call that painting, you call that art!

"Because you have made something more like a woman than a house, you think that you have set your fingers on the goal; you are quite proud that you need not to write *currus venustus* or *pulcher homo* beside your figures, as early painters were wont to do and you fancy that you have done wonders. Ah! my good friend, there is still something more to learn, and you will use up a great deal of chalk and cover many a canvas before you will learn it. Yes, truly, a woman carries her head in just such a way, so she holds her garments gathered into her hand; her eyes grow dreamy and soft with that expression of meek sweetness, and even so the quivering shadow of the lashes hovers upon her cheeks. It is all there, and yet it is not there. What is lacking? A nothing, but that nothing is everything.

"There you have the semblance of life, but you do not express its fulness and effluence, that indescribable something, perhaps the soul itself, that envelopes the outlines of the body like a haze; that flower of life, in short, that Titian and Rafael caught. Your utmost achievement hitherto has only brought you to the starting-point. You might now perhaps begin to do excellent work, but you grow weary all too soon;

and the crowd admires, and those who know smile.

"Oh, Mabuse! oh, my master!" cried the strange speaker, "thou art a thief! Thou hast carried away the secret of life with thee!"

"Nevertheless," he began again, "this picture of yours is worth more than all the paintings of that rascal Rubens, with his mountains of Flemish flesh raddled with vermilion, his torrents of red hair, his riot of color. You, at least have color there, and feeling and drawing—the three essentials in art."

The young man roused himself from his deep musings.

"Why, my good man, the Saint is sublime!" he cried. "There is a subtlety of imagination about those two figures, the Saint Mary and the Shipman, that can not be found among Italian masters; I do not know a single one of them capable of imagining the Shipman's hesitation."

"Did that little malapert come with you?" asked Porbus of the older man.

"Alas! master, pardon my boldness," cried the neophyte, and the color mounted to his face. "I am unknown—a dauber by instinct, and but lately come to this city—the fountain-head of all learning."

"Set to work," said Porbus, handing him a bit of red chalk and a sheet of paper.

The new-comer quickly sketched the Saint Mary line for line.

"Aha!" exclaimed the old man. "Your name?" he added.

The young man wrote "Nicolas Poussin" below the sketch.

"Not bad that for a beginning," said the strange speaker, who had discoursed so wildly. "I see that we can talk of art in your presence. I do not blame you for admiring Porbus's saint. In the eyes of the world she is a masterpiece, and those alone who have been initiated into the inmost mysteries of art can discover her shortcomings. But it is worth while to give you the lesson, for you are able to understand it, so I will show you how little it needs to complete this picture. You must be all eyes, all attention, for it may be that such a chance of learning will never come in your way again—Porbus! your palette."

Porbus went in search of palette and brushes. The little old man turned back his sleeves with impatient energy, seized the palette, covered with many hues, that Porbus handed to him, and snatched rather than took a handful of brushes of various sizes from the hands of his acquaintance. His pointed beard suddenly bristled—a menacing movement that expressed the prick of a lover's fancy. As he loaded his brush, he muttered between his teeth, "These paints are only fit to fling out of the window, together with the fellow who ground them, their crudeness and falseness are disgusting! How can one paint with this?"

He dipped the tip of the brush with feverish eagerness in the different pigments, making the circuit of the palette several times more quickly than the organist of a cathedral sweeps the octaves on the keyboard of his clavier for the "O Filii" at Easter.

Porbus and Poussin, on either side of the easel, stood stock-still, watching with intense interest.

"Look, young man," he began again, "see how three or four strokes of the brush and a thin glaze of blue let in the free air to play about the head of the poor Saint, who must have felt stifled and oppressed by the close atmosphere! See how the drapery begins to flutter; you feel that it is lifted by the breeze! A moment ago it hung as heavily and stiffly as if it were held out by pins. Do you see how the satin sheen that I have just given to the breast rends the pliant, silken softness of a young girl's skin, and how the brown-red, blended with burnt ochre, brings warmth into the cold gray of the deep shadow where the blood lay congealed instead of coursing through the veins? Young man, young man, no master could teach you how to do this that I am doing before your eyes. Mabuse alone possessed the secret of giving life to his figures; Mabuse had but one pupil—that was I. I have had none, and I am old. You have sufficient intelligence to imagine the rest from the glimpses that I am giving you."

While the old man was speaking, he gave a touch here and there; sometimes two strokes of the brush, sometimes a single one; but every stroke told so well, that the whole picture seemed transfigured—the painting was flooded with light. He worked with such passionate fervor that beads of sweat gathered upon his bare forehead; he worked so quickly, in brief, impatient jerks, that it seemed to young Poussin as if some familiar spirit inhabiting the body of this strange being took a grotesque pleasure in making use of the man's hands against his own will. The unearthly glitter of his eyes, the convulsive movements that seemed like struggles, gave to this fancy a semblance of truth which could not but stir a young imagination. The old man continued, saying as he did so—

"Paf! paf! that is how to lay it on, young man!— Little touches! come and bring a glow into those icy cold tones for me! Just so! Pon! pon! pon!" and those parts of the picture that he had pointed out as cold and lifeless flushed with warmer hues, a few bold strokes of color brought all the tones of the picture into the required harmony with the glowing tints of the Egyptian, and the differences in temperament vanished.

"Look you, youngster, the last touches make the picture. Porbus has given it a hundred strokes for every one of mine. No one thanks us for what lies beneath. Bear that in mind."

At last the restless spirit stopped, and turn-

ing to Porbus and Poussin, who were speechless with admiration, he spoke—

"This is not as good as my 'Belle Noiseuse'; still one might put one's name to such a thing as this.— Yes, I would put my name to it," he added, rising to reach for a mirror, in which he looked at the picture.— "And now," he said, "will you both come and breakfast with me? I have a smoked ham and some very fair wine! . . . Eh! eh! the times may be bad, but we can still have some talk about art! We can talk like equals. . . . Here is a little fellow who has aptitude," he added, laying a hand on Nicolas Poussin's shoulder.

In this way the stranger became aware of the threadbare condition of the Norman's doublet. He drew a leather purse from his girdle, felt in it, found two gold coins, and held them out.

"I will buy your sketch," he said.

"Take it," said Porbus, as he saw the other start and flush with embarrassment, for Poussin had the pride of poverty. "Pray, take it; he has a couple of king's ransoms in his pouch!"

The three came down together from the studio, and, talking of art by the way, reached a picturesque wooden house hard by the Pont Saint-Michel. Poussin wondered a moment at its ornament, at the knocker, at the frames of the casements, at the scroll-work designs, and in the next he stood in a vast low-ceiled room. A table, covered with tempting dishes, stood near the

blazing fire, and (luck unhoped for) he was in the company of two great artists full of genial good humor.

"Do not look too long at that canvas, young man," said Porbus, when he saw that Poussin was standing, struck with wonder, before a painting. "You would fall a victim to despair."

It was the "Adam" painted by Mabuse to purchase his release from the prison, where his creditors had so long kept him. And, as a matter of fact, the figure stood out so boldly and convincingly, that Nicolas Poussin began to understand the real meaning of the words poured out by the old artist, who was himself looking at the picture with apparent satisfaction, but without enthusiasm. "I have done better than that!" he seemed to be saying to himself.

"There is life in it," he said aloud; "in that respect my poor master here surpassed himself, but there is some lack of truth in the background. The man lives indeed; he is rising, and will come toward us; but the atmosphere, the sky, the air, the breath of the breeze—you look and feel for them, but they are not there. And then the man himself is, after all, only a man! Ah! but the one man in the world who came direct from the hands of God must have had a something divine about him that is wanting here. Mabuse himself would grind his teeth and say so when he was not drunk."

Poussin looked from the speaker to Porbus,

and from Porbus to the speaker, with restless curiosity. He went up to the latter to ask for the name of their host; but the painter laid a finger on his lips with an air of mystery. The young man's interest was excited; he kept silence, but hoped that sooner or later some word might be let fall that would reveal the name of his entertainer. It was evident that he was a man of talent and very wealthy, for Porbus listened to him respectfully, and the vast room was crowded with marvels of art.

A magnificent portrait of a woman, hung against the dark oak panels of the wall, next caught Poussin's attention.

"What a glorious Giorgione!" he cried.

"No," said his host, "it is an early daub of mine—"

"Gramercy! I am in the abode of the god of painting, it seems!" cried Poussin ingenuously.

The old man smiled as if he had long grown familiar with such praise.

"Master Frenhofer!" said Porbus, "do you think you could spare me a little of your capital Rhine wine?"

"A couple of pipes!" answered his host; "one to discharge a debt, for the pleasure of seeing your pretty sinner, the other as a present from a friend."

"Ah! if I had my health," returned Porbus, "and if you would but let me see your 'Belle Noiseuse,' I would paint some great picture,

with breadth in it and depth; the figures should be life-size."

"Let you see my work!" cried the painter in agitation. "No, no! it is not perfect yet; something still remains for me to do. Yesterday, in the dusk," he said, "I thought I had reached the end. Her eyes seemed moist, the flesh quivered, something stirred the tresses of her hair. She breathed! But though I have succeeded in reproducing Nature's roundness and relief on the flat surface of the canvas, this morning, by daylight, I found out my mistake. Ah! to achieve that glorious result I have studied the works of the great masters of color, stripping off coat after coat of color from Titian's canvas, analyzing the pigments of the king of light. Like that sovereign painter, I began the face in a slight tone with a supple and fat paste—for shadow is but an accident; bear that in mind, youngster!—Then I began afresh, and by half-tones and thin glazes of color less and less transparent, I gradually deepened the tints to the deepest black of the strongest shadows. An ordinary painter makes his shadows something entirely different in nature from the high lights; they are wood or brass, or what you will, anything but flesh in shadow. You feel that even if those figures were to alter their position, those shadow stains would never be cleansed away, those parts of the picture would never glow with light.

"I have escaped one mistake, into which the

most famous painters have sometimes fallen; in my canvas the whiteness shines through the densest and most persistent shadow. I have not marked out the limits of my figure in hard, dry outlines, and brought every least anatomical detail into prominence (like a host of dunces, who fancy that they can draw because they can trace a line elaborately smooth and clean), for the human body is not contained within the limits of line. In this the sculptor can approach the truth more nearly than we painters. Nature's way is a complicated succession of curve within curve. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as drawing.—Do not laugh, young man; strange as that speech may seem to you, you will understand the truth in it some day.—A line is a method of expressing the effect of light upon an object; but there are no lines in Nature, everything is solid. We draw by modeling, that is to say, that we disengage an object from its setting; the distribution of the light alone gives to a body the appearance by which we know it. So I have not defined the outlines; I have suffused them with a haze of half-tints warm or golden, in such a sort that you can not lay your finger on the exact spot where background and contours meet. Seen from near, the picture looks a blur; it seems to lack definition; but step back two paces, and the whole thing becomes clear, distinct, and solid; the body stands out; the rounded form comes into relief; you feel that the air plays round it.

And yet—I am not satisfied; I have misgivings. Perhaps one ought not to draw a single line; perhaps it would be better to attack the face from the centre, taking the highest prominences first, proceeding from them through the whole range of shadows to the heaviest of all. Is not this the method of the sun, the divine painter of the world? Oh, Nature, Nature! who has surprised thee, fugitive? But, after all, too much knowledge, like ignorance, brings you to a negation. I have doubts about my work."

There was a pause. Then the old man spoke again. "I have been at work upon it for ten years, young man; but what are ten short years in a struggle with Nature? Do we know how long Sir Pygmalion wrought at the one statue that came to life?" The old man fell into deep musings, and gazed before him with unseeing eyes, while he played unheedingly with his knife.

"Look, he is in conversation with his *dæmon*!" murmured Porbus.

At the word, Nicolas Poussin felt himself carried away by an unaccountable accession of artist's curiosity. For him the old man, at once intent and inert, the seer with the unseeing eyes, became something more than a man—a fantastic spirit living in a mysterious world, and countless vague thoughts awoke within his soul. The effect of this species of fascination upon his mind can no more be described in words than the passionate longing awakened in an exile's heart by

the song that recalls his home. He thought of the scorn that the old man affected to display for the noblest efforts of art, of his wealth, his manners, of the deference paid to him by Porbus. The mysterious picture, the work of patience on which he had wrought so long in secret, was doubtless a work of genius, for the head of the Virgin which young Poussin had admired so frankly was beautiful even beside Mabuse's "Adam"—there was no mistaking the imperial manner of one of the princes of art. Everything combined to set the old man beyond the limits of human nature.

Out of the wealth of fancies in Nicolas Poussin's brain an idea grew, and gathered shape and clearness. He saw in this supernatural being a complete type of the artist nature, a nature mocking and kindly, barren and prolific, an erratic spirit intrusted with great and manifold powers which she too often abuses, leading sober reason, the Philistine, and sometimes even the amateur forth into a stony wilderness where they see nothing; but the white-winged maiden herself, wild as her fancies may be, finds epics there and castles and works of art. For Poussin, the enthusiast, the old man, was suddenly transfigured, and became Art incarnate, Art with its mysteries, its vehement passion and its dreams.

"Yes, my dear Porbus," Frenhofer continued, "hitherto I have never found a flawless model, a body with outlines of perfect beauty, the car-

nations—Ah! where does she live?" he cried, breaking in upon himself, "the undiscoverable Venus of the older time, for whom we have sought so often, only to find the scattered gleams of her beauty here and there? Oh! to behold once and for one moment, Nature grown perfect and divine, the Ideal at last, I would give all that I possess. . . . Nay, Beauty divine, I would go to seek thee in the dim land of the dead; like Orpheus, I would go down into the Hades of Art to bring back the life of art from among the shadows of death."

"We can go now," said Porbus to Poussin. "He neither hears nor sees us any longer."

"Let us go to his studio," said young Poussin, wondering greatly.

"Oh! the old fox takes care that no one shall enter it. His treasures are so carefully guarded that it is impossible for us to come at them. I have not waited for your suggestion and your fancy to attempt to lay hands on this mystery by force."

"So there is a mystery?"

"Yes," answered Porbus. "Old Frenhofer is the only pupil Mabuse would take. Frenhofer became the painter's friend, deliverer, and father; he sacrificed the greater part of his fortune to enable Mabuse to indulge in riotous extravagance, and in return Mabuse bequeathed to him the secret of relief, the power of giving to his figures the wonderful life, the flower of Nature,

the eternal despair of art, the secret which Mabuse knew so well that one day when he had sold the flowered brocade suit in which he should have appeared at the Entry of Charles V, he accompanied his master in a suit of paper painted to resemble the brocade. The peculiar richness and splendor of the stuff struck the Emperor; he complimented the old drunkard's patron on the artist's appearance, and so the trick was brought to light. Frenhofer is a passionate enthusiast, who sees above and beyond other painters. He has meditated profoundly on color, and the absolute truth of line; but by the way of much research he has come to doubt the very existence of the objects of his search. He says, in moments of despondency, that there is no such thing as drawing, and that by means of lines we can only reproduce geometrical figures; but that is overshooting the mark, for by outline and shadow you can reproduce form without any color at all, which shows that our art, like Nature, is composed of an infinite number of elements. Drawing gives you the skeleton, the anatomical framework, and color puts the life into it; but life without the skeleton is even more incomplete than a skeleton without life. But there is something else truer still, and it is this—for painters, practise and observation are everything; and when theories and poetical ideas begin to quarrel with the brushes, the end is doubt, as has happened with our good friend, who is half crack-brained

enthusiast, half painter. A sublime painter! but unlucky for him, he was born to riches, and so he has leisure to follow his fancies. Do not you follow his example! Work! painters have no business to think, except brush in hand."

"We will find a way into his studio!" cried Poussin confidently. He had ceased to heed Porbus's remarks. The other smiled at the young painter's enthusiasm, asked him to come to see him again, and they parted. Nicolas Poussin went slowly back to the Rue de la Harpe, and passed the modest hostelry where he was lodging without noticing it. A feeling of uneasiness prompted him to hurry up the crazy staircase till he reached a room at the top, a quaint, airy recess under the steep, high-pitched roof common among houses in old Paris. In the one dingy window of the place sat a young girl, who sprang up at once when she heard some one at the door; it was the prompting of love; she had recognized the painter's touch on the latch.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked.

"The matter is . . . is . . . Oh! I have felt that I am a painter! Until to-day I have had doubts, but now I believe in myself! There is the making of a great man in me! Never mind, Gillette, we shall be rich and happy! There is gold at the tips of those brushes—"

He broke off suddenly. The joy faded from his powerful and earnest face as he compared his vast hopes with his slender resources. The walls

were covered with sketches in chalk on sheets of common paper. There were but four canvases in the room. Colors were very costly, and the young painter's palette was almost bare. Yet in the midst of his poverty he possessed and was conscious of the possession of inexhaustible treasures of the heart, of a devouring genius equal to all the tasks that lay before him.

He had been brought to Paris by a nobleman among his friends, or perchance by the consciousness of his powers; and in Paris he had found a mistress, one of those noble and generous souls who choose to suffer by a great man's side, who share his struggles and strive to understand his fancies, accepting their lot of poverty and love as bravely and dauntlessly as other women will set themselves to bear the burden of riches and make a parade of their insensibility. The smile that stole over Gillette's lips filled the garret with golden light, and rivaled the brightness of the sun in heaven. The sun, moreover, does not always shine in heaven, whereas Gillette was always in the garret, absorbed in her passion, occupied by Poussin's happiness and sorrow, consoling the genius which found an outlet in love before art engrossed it.

"Listen, Gillette. Come here."

The girl obeyed joyously, and sprang upon the painter's knee. Hers was perfect grace and beauty, and the loveliness of spring; she was adorned with all luxuriant fairness of outward

form, lighted up by the glow of a fair soul within.

"Oh! God," he cried; "I shall never dare to tell her—"

"A secret?" she cried; "I must know it!"

Poussin was absorbed in his dreams.

"Do tell it me!"

"Gillette . . . poor beloved heart! . . ."

"Oh! do you want something of me?"

"Yes."

"If you wish me to sit once more for you as I did the other day," she continued with playful petulance, "I will never consent to do such a thing again, for your eyes say nothing all the while. You do not think of me at all, and yet you look at me—"

"Would you rather have me draw another woman?"

"Perhaps—if she were very ugly," she said.

"Well," said Poussin gravely, "and if, for the sake of my fame to come, if to make me a great painter, you must sit to some one else?"

"You may try me," she said; "you know quite well that I would not."

Poussin's head sank on her breast; he seemed to be overpowered by some intolerable joy or sorrow.

"Listen," she cried, plucking at the sleeve of Poussin's threadbare doublet. "I told you, Nick, that I would lay down my life for you; but I

never promised you that I in my lifetime would lay down my love."

"Your love?" cried the young artist.

"If I showed myself thus to another, you would love me no longer, and I should feel myself unworthy of you. Obedience to your fancies was a natural and simple thing, was it not? Even against my own will, I am glad and even proud to do thy dear will. But for another, out upon it!"

"Forgive me, my Gillette," said the painter, falling upon his knees; "I would rather be beloved than famous. You are fairer than success and honors. There, fling the pencils away, and burn these sketches! I have made a mistake. I was meant to love and not to paint. Perish art and all its secrets!"

Gillette looked admiringly at him, in an ecstasy of happiness! She was triumphant; she felt instinctively that art was laid aside for her sake, and flung like a grain of incense at her feet.

"Yet he is only an old man," Poussin continued; "for him you would be a woman, and nothing more. You—so perfect!"

"I must love you indeed!" she cried, ready to sacrifice even love's scruples to the lover who had given up so much for her sake; "but I should bring about my own ruin. Ah! to ruin myself, to lose everything for you! . . . It is a very glorious thought! Ah! but you will forget me.

Oh! what evil thought is this that has come to you?"

"I love you, and yet I thought of it," he said, with something like remorse. "Am I so base a wretch?"

"Let us consult Père Hardouin," she said.

"No, no! Let it be a secret between us."

"Very well; I will do it. But you must not be there," she said. "Stay at the door with your dagger in your hand; and if I call, rush in and kill the painter."

Poussin forgot everything but art. He held Gillette tightly in his arms.

"He loves me no longer!" thought Gillette when she was alone. She repented of her resolution already.

But to these misgivings there soon succeeded a sharper pain, and she strove to banish a hideous thought that arose in her own heart. It seemed to her that her own love had grown less already, with a vague suspicion that the painter had fallen somewhat in her eyes.

II

CATHERINE LESCAULT

Three months after Poussin and Porbus met, the latter went to see Master Frenhofer. The old man had fallen a victim to one of those profound and spontaneous fits of discouragement that are

caused, according to medical logicians, by indigestion, flatulence, fever, or enlargement of the spleen; or, if you take the opinion of the Spiritualists, by the imperfections of our mortal nature. The good man had simply overworked himself in putting the finishing touches to his mysterious picture. He was lounging in a huge carved oak chair, covered with black leather, and did not change his listless attitude, but glanced at Porbus like a man who has settled down into low spirits.

"Well, master," said Porbus, "was the ultramarine bad that you sent for to Bruges? Is the new white difficult to grind? Is the oil poor, or are the brushes recalcitrant?"

"Alas!" cried the old man, "for a moment I thought that my work was finished, but I am sure that I am mistaken in certain details, and I can not rest until I have cleared my doubts. I am thinking of traveling. I am going to Turkey, to Greece, to Asia, in quest of a model, so as to compare my picture with the different living forms of Nature. Perhaps," and a smile of contentment stole over his face, "perhaps I have Nature herself up there. At times I am half afraid that a breath may waken her, and that she will escape me."

He rose to his feet as if to set out at once.

"Aha!" said Porbus, "I have come just in time to save you the trouble and expense of a journey."

"What?" asked Frenhofer in amazement.

"Young Poussin is loved by a woman of incomparable and flawless beauty. But, dear master, if he consents to lend her to you, at the least you ought to let us see your work."

The old man stood motionless and completely dazed.

"What!" he cried piteously at last, "show you my creation, my bride? Rend the veil that has kept my happiness sacred? It would be an infamous profanation. For ten years I have lived with her; she is mine, mine alone; she loves me. Has she not smiled at me, at each stroke of the brush upon the canvas? She has a soul—the soul that I have given her. She would blush if any eyes but mine should rest on her. To exhibit her! Where is the husband, the lover so vile as to bring the woman he loves to dishonor? When you paint a picture for the court, you do not put your whole soul into it; to courtiers you sell lay figures duly colored. My painting is no painting, it is a sentiment, a passion. She was born in my studio, there she must dwell in maiden solitude, and only when clad can she issue thence. Poetry and women only lay the last veil aside for their lovers Have we Rafael's model, Ariosto's Angelica, Dante's Beatrice? Nay, only their form and semblance. But this picture, locked away above in my studio, is an exception in our art. It is not a canvas, it is a woman—a woman with whom I talk. I share her thoughts, her tears, her laughter. Would you have me fling aside these ten

years of happiness like a cloak? Would you have me cease at once to be father, lover, and creator? She is not a creature, but a creation.

"Bring your young painter here. I will give him my treasures; I will give him pictures by Correggio and Michelangelo and Titian; I will kiss his footprints in the dust; but make him my rival! Shame on me. Ah! ah! I am a lover first, and then a painter. Yes, with my latest sigh I could find strength to burn my 'Belle Noiseuse'; but—compel her to endure the gaze of a stranger, a young man and a painter!—Ah! no, no! I would kill him on the morrow who should sully her with a glance! Nay, you, my friend, I would kill you with my own hands in a moment if you did not kneel in reverence before her! Now, will you have me submit my idol to the careless eyes and senseless criticisms of fools? Ah! love is a mystery; it can only live hidden in the depths of the heart. You say, even to your friend, 'Behold her whom I love,' and there is an end of love."

The old man seemed to have grown young again; there was light and life in his eyes, and a faint flush of red in his pale face. His hands shook. Porbus was so amazed by the passionate vehemence of Frenhofer's words that he knew not what to reply to this utterance of an emotion as strange as it was profound. Was Frenhofer sane or mad? Had he fallen a victim to some freak of the artist's fancy? or were these ideas of his produced by the strange light-headedness

which comes over us during the long travail of a work of art. Would it be possible to come to terms with this singular passion?

Harassed by all these doubts, Porbus spoke—"Is it not woman for woman?" he said. "Does not Poussin submit his mistress to your gaze?"

"What is she?" retorted the other. "A mistress who will be false to him sooner or later. Mine will be faithful to me forever."

"Well, well," said Porbus, "let us say no more about it. But you may die before you will find such a flawless beauty as hers, even in Asia, and then your picture will be left unfinished.

"Oh! it is finished," said Frenhofer. "Standing before it you would think that it was a living woman lying on the velvet couch beneath the shadow of the curtains. Perfumes are burning on a golden tripod by her side. You would be tempted to lay your hand upon the tassel of the cord that holds back the curtains; it would seem to you that you saw her breast rise and fall as she breathed; that you beheld the living Catherine Lescault, the beautiful courtezan whom men called 'La Belle Noiseuse.' And yet—if I could but be sure—"

"Then go to Asia," returned Porbus, noticing a certain indecision in Frenhofer's face. And with that Porbus made a few steps toward the door. By that time Gillette and Nicolas Poussin had reached Frenhofer's house. The girl drew away her arm from her lover's as she stood on the

threshold, and shrank back as if some presentiment flashed through her mind.

"Oh! what have I come to do here?" she asked of her lover in low vibrating tones, with her eyes fixed on his.

"Gillette, I have left you to decide; I am ready to obey you in everything. You are my conscience and my glory. Go home again; I shall be happier, perhaps, if you do not—"

"Am I my own when you speak to me like that? No, no; I am a child.—Come," she added, seemingly with a violent effort; "if our love dies, if I plant a long regret in my heart, your fame will be the reward of my obedience to your wishes, will it not? Let us go in. I shall still live on as a memory on your palette; that shall be life for me afterward."

The door opened, and the two lovers encountered Porbus, who was surprised by the beauty of Gillette, whose eyes were full of tears. He hurried her, trembling from head to foot, into the presence of the old painter.

"Here!" he cried, "is she not worth all the masterpieces in the world!"

Frenhofer trembled. There stood Gillette in the artless and childlike attitude of some timid and innocent Georgian, carried off by brigands, and confronted with a slave merchant. A shamefaced red flushed her face, her eyes drooped, her hands hung by her side, her strength seemed to have failed her, her tears protested against this

outrage. Poussin cursed himself in despair that he should have brought his fair treasure from its hiding-place. The lover overcame the artist, and countless doubts assailed Poussin's heart when he saw youth dawn in the old man's eyes, as, like a painter, he discerned every line of the form hidden beneath the young girl's vesture. Then the lover's savage jealousy awoke.

"Gillette!" he cried, "let us go."

The girl turned joyously at the cry and the tone in which it was uttered, raised her eyes to his, looked at him, and fled to his arms.

"Ah! then you love me," she cried; "you love me!" and she burst into tears.

She had spirit enough to suffer in silence, but she had no strength to hide her joy.

"Oh! leave her with me for one moment," said the old painter, "and you shall compare her with my Catherine . . . yes—I consent."

Frenhofer's words likewise came from him like a lover's cry. His vanity seemed to be engaged for his semblance of womanhood; he anticipated the triumph of the beauty of his own creation over the beauty of the living girl.

"Do not give him time to change his mind!" cried Porbus, striking Poussin on the shoulder. "The flower of love soon fades, but the flower of art is immortal."

"Then am I only a woman now for him?" said Gillette. She was watching Poussin and Porbus closely.

She raised her head proudly; she glanced at Frenhofer, and her eyes flashed; then as she saw how her lover had fallen again to gazing at the portrait which he had taken at first for a Giorgione—

"Ah!" she cried; "let us go up to the studio. He never gave me such a look."

The sound of her voice recalled Poussin from his dreams.

"Old man," he said, "do you see this blade? I will plunge it into your heart at the first cry from this young girl; I will set fire to your house, and no one shall leave it alive. Do you understand?"

Nicolas Poussin scowled; every word was a menace. Gillette took comfort from the young painter's bearing, and yet more from that gesture, and almost forgave him for sacrificing her to his art and his glorious future.

Porbus and Poussin stood at the door of the studio and looked at each other in silence. At first the painter of the Saint Mary of Egypt hazarded some exclamations: "Ah! she has taken off her clothes; he told her to come into the light —he is comparing the two!" but the sight of the deep distress in Poussin's face suddenly silenced him; and though old painters no longer feel these scruples, so petty in the presence of art, he admired them because they were so natural and gracious in the lover. The young man kept his hand on the hilt of his dagger, and his ear was almost glued to the door. The two men standing

in the shadow might have been conspirators waiting for the hour when they might strike down a tyrant.

"Come in, come in," cried the old man. He was radiant with delight. "My work is perfect. I can show her now with pride. Never shall painter, brushes, colors, light, and canvas produce a rival for 'Catherine Lescault,' the beautiful courtezan!"

Porbus and Poussin, burning with eager curiosity, hurried into a vast studio. Everything was in disorder and covered with dust, but they saw a few pictures here and there upon the wall. They stopped first of all in admiration before the life-size figure of a woman partially draped.

"Oh! never mind that," said Frenhofer; "that is a rough daub that I made, a study, a pose, it is nothing. These are my failures," he went on, indicating the enchanting compositions upon the walls of the studio.

This scorn for such works of art struck Porbus and Poussin dumb with amazement. They looked round for the picture of which he had spoken, and could not discover it.

"Look here!" said the old man. His hair was disordered, his face aglow with a more than human exaltation, his eyes glittered, he breathed hard like a young lover frenzied by love.

"Aha!" he cried, "you did not expect to see such perfection! You are looking for a picture, and you see a woman before you. There is such

depth in that canvas, the atmosphere is so true that you can not distinguish it from the air that surrounds us. Where is art? Art has vanished, it is invisible! It is the form of a living girl that you see before you. Have I not caught the very hues of life, the spirit of the living line that defines the figure? Is there not the effect produced there like that which all natural objects present in the atmosphere about them, or fishes in the water? Do you see how the figure stands out against the background? Does it not seem to you that you pass your hand along the back? But then for seven years I studied and watched how the daylight blends with the objects on which it falls. And the hair, the light pours over it like a flood, does it not? . . . Ah! she breathed, I am sure that she breathed! Her breast—ah, see! Who would not fall on his knees before her? Her pulses throb. She will rise to her feet. Wait!"

"Do you see anything?" Poussin asked of Porbus.

"No . . . do you?"

"I see nothing."

The two painters left the old man to his ecstasy, and tried to ascertain whether the light that fell full upon the canvas had in some way neutralized all the effect for them. They moved to the right and left of the picture; they came in front, bending down and standing upright by turns.

"Yes, yes, it is really canvas," said Frenhofer,

who mistook the nature of this minute investigation.

"Look! the canvas is on a stretcher, here is the easel; indeed, here are my colors, my brushes," and he took up a brush and held it out to them, all unsuspicious of their thought.

"The old *lansquenet* is laughing at us," said Poussin, coming once more toward the supposed picture. "I can see nothing there but confused masses of color and a multitude of fantastical lines that go to make a dead wall of paint."

"We are mistaken, look!" said Porbus.

In a corner of the canvas, as they came nearer, they distinguished a bare foot emerging from the chaos of color, half-tints and vague shadows that made up a dim, formless fog. Its living delicate beauty held them spellbound. This fragment that had escaped an incomprehensible, slow, and gradual destruction seemed to them like the Parian marble torso of some Venus emerging from the ashes of a ruined town.

"There is a woman beneath," exclaimed Porbus, calling Poussin's attention to the coats of paint with which the old artist had overlaid and concealed his work in the quest of perfection.

Both artists turned involuntarily to Frenhofer. They began to have some understanding, vague though it was, of the ecstasy in which he lived.

"He believes it in all good faith," said Porbus.

"Yes, my friend," said the old man, rousing himself from his dreams, "it needs faith, faith in

art, and you must live for long with your work to produce such a creation. What toil some of those shadows have cost me. Look! there is a faint shadow there upon the cheek beneath the eyes—if you saw that on a human face, it would seem to you that you could never render it with paint. Do you think that that effect has not cost unheard of toil?

"But not only so, dear Porbus. Look closely at my work, and you will understand more clearly what I was saying as to methods of modeling and outline. Look at the high lights on the bosom, and see how by touch on touch, thickly laid on, I have raised the surface so that it catches the light itself and blends it with the lustrous whiteness of the high lights, and how by an opposite process, by flattening the surface of the paint, and leaving no trace of the passage of the brush, I have succeeded in softening the contours of my figures and enveloping them in half-tints until the very idea of drawing, of the means by which the effect is produced, fades away, and the picture has the roundness and relief of nature. Come closer. You will see the manner of working better; at a little distance it can not be seen. There! Just there, it is, I think, very plainly to be seen," and with the tip of his brush he pointed out a patch of transparent color to the two painters.

Porbus, laying a hand on the old artist's shoulder, turned to Poussin with a "Do you know that in him we see a very great painter?"

"He is even more of a poet than a painter," Poussin answered gravely.

"There," Porbus continued, as he touched the canvas, "lies the utmost limit of our art on earth."

"Beyond that point it loses itself in the skies," said Poussin.

"What joys lie there on this piece of canvas!" exclaimed Porbus.

The old man, deep in his own musings, smiled at the woman he alone beheld, and did not hear.

"But sooner or later he will find out that there is nothing there!" cried Poussin.

"Nothing on my canvas!" said Frenhofer, looking in turn at either painter and at his picture.

"What have you done?" muttered Porbus, turning to Poussin.

The old man clutched the young painter's arm and said, "Do you see nothing? clodpate! Huguenot! varlet! cullion! What brought you here into my studio?—My good Porbus," he went on, as he turned to the painter, "are you also making a fool of me? Answer! I am your friend. Tell me, have I ruined my picture after all?"

Porbus hesitated and said nothing, but there was such intolerable anxiety in the old man's white face that he pointed to the easel.

"Look!" he said.

Frenhofer looked for a moment at his picture, and staggered back.

"Nothing! nothing! After ten years of work . . ." He sat down and wept.

"So I am a dotard, a madman, I have neither talent nor power! I am only a rich man, who works for his own pleasure, and makes no progress. I have done nothing after all!"

He looked through his tears at his picture. Suddenly he rose and stood proudly before the two painters.

"By the body and blood of Christ," he cried with flashing eyes, "you are jealous! You would have me think that my picture is a failure because you want to steal her from me! Ah! I see her, I see her," he cried "she is marvelously beautiful . . ."

At that moment Poussin heard the sound of weeping; Gillette was crouching forgotten in a corner. All at once the painter once more became the lover. "What is it, my angel?" he asked her.

"Kill me!" she sobbed. "I must be a vile thing if I love you still, for I despise you. . . . I admire you, and I hate you! I love you, and I feel that I hate you even now!"

While Gillette's words sounded in Poussin's ears, Frenhofer drew a green serge covering over his "Catherine" with the sober deliberation of a jeweler who locks his drawers when he suspects his visitors to be expert thieves. He gave the two painters a profoundly astute glance that expressed to the full his suspicions, and his contempt for them, saw them out of his studio with impetuous haste and in silence, until from the

threshold of his house he bade them "Good-by, my young friends!"

That farewell struck a chill of dread into the two painters. Porbus, in anxiety, went again on the morrow to see Frenhofer, and learned that he had died in the night after burning his canvases.

PARIS, *February, 1832.*

MY FRIEND THE MURDERER

BY A. CONAN DOYLE

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"NUMBER 43 is no better, doctor," said the head-warder, in a slightly reproachful accent, looking in round the corner of my door.

"Confound 43!" I responded from behind the pages of the *Australian Sketcher.*

"And 61 says his tubes are paining him. Couldn't you do anything for him?"

He is a walking drug-shop," said I. "He has the whole British pharmacopœa inside him. I believe his tubes are as sound as yours are."

"Then there's 7 and 108, they are chronic," continued the warder, glancing down a blue slip of paper. "And 28 knocked off work yesterday —said lifting things gave him a stitch in the side. I want you to have a look at him, if you don't mind, doctor. There's 31, too—him that killed John Adamson in the Corinthian brig—he's been carrying on awful in the night, shrieking and yelling, he has, and no stopping him either."

"All right, I'll have a look at him afterward," I said, tossing my paper carelessly aside, and pouring myself out a cup of coffee. "Nothing else to report, I suppose, warder?"

The official protruded his head a little further

into the room. "Beg pardon, doctor," he said, in a confidential tone, "but I notice as 82 has a bit of a cold, and it would be a good excuse for you to visit him and have a chat, maybe."

The cup of coffee was arrested half-way to my lips as I stared in amazement at the man's serious face.

"An excuse?" I said. "An excuse? What the deuce are you talking about, McPherson? You see me trudging about all day at my practise, when I'm not looking after the prisoners, and coming back every night as tired as a dog, and you talk about finding an excuse for doing more work."

"You'd like it, doctor," said Warder McPherson, insinuating one of his shoulders into the room. "That man's story's worth listening to if you could get him to tell it, though he's not what you'd call free in his speech. Maybe you don't know who 82 is?"

"No, I don't, and I don't care either," I answered, in the conviction that some local ruffian was about to be foisted upon me as a celebrity.

"He's Maloney," said the warder, "him that turned Queen's evidence after the murders at Bluemansdyke."

"You don't say so?" I ejaculated, laying down my cup in astonishment. I had heard of this ghastly series of murders, and read an account of them in a London magazine long before setting foot in the colony. I remembered that the atroc-

ities committed had thrown the Burke and Hare crimes completely into the shade, and that one of the most villainous of the gang had saved his own skin by betraying his companions. "Are you sure?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, it's him right enough. Just you draw him out a bit, and he'll astonish you. He's a man to know, is Maloney; that's to say, in moderation;" and the head grinned, bobbed, and disappeared, leaving me to finish my breakfast and ruminate over what I had heard.

The surgeonship of an Australian prison is not an enviable position. It may be endurable in Melbourne or Sydney, but the little town of Perth has few attractions to recommend it, and those few had been long exhausted. The climate was detestable, and the society far from congenial. Sheep and cattle were the staple support of the community; and their prices, breeding, and diseases the principal topic of conversation. Now as I, being an outsider, possessed neither the one nor the other, and was utterly callous to the new "dip" and the "rot" and other kindred topics, I found myself in a state of mental isolation, and was ready to hail anything which might relieve the monotony of my existence. Maloney, the murderer, had at least some distinctiveness and individuality in his character, and might act as a tonic to a mind sick of the commonplaces of existence. I determined that I should follow the warder's advice, and take the excuse for making

his acquaintance. When, therefore, I went upon my usual matutinal round, I turned the lock of the door which bore the convict's number upon it, and walked into the cell.

The man was lying in a heap upon his rough bed as I entered, but, uncoiling his long limbs, he started up and stared at me with an insolent look of defiance on his face which augured badly for our interview. He had a pale, set face, with sandy hair and a steely-blue eye, with something feline in its expression. His frame was tall and muscular, though there was a curious bend in his shoulders, which almost amounted to a deformity. An ordinary observer meeting him in the street might have put him down as a well-developed man, fairly handsome, and of studious habits—even in the hideous uniform of the rottenest convict establishment he imparted a certain refinement to his carriage which marked him out among the inferior ruffians around him.

"I'm not on the sick-list," he said, gruffly. There was something in the hard, rasping voice which dispelled all softer illusions, and made me realize that I was face to face with the man of the Lena Valley and Bluemansdyke, the bloodiest bushranger that ever stuck up a farm or cut the throats of its occupants.

"I know you're not," I answered. "Warder McPherson told me you had a cold, though, and I thought I'd look in and see you."

"Blast Warder McPherson, and blast you,

too!" yelled the convict, in a paroxysm of rage. "Oh, that's right," he added in a quieter voice; "hurry away; report me to the governor, do! Get me another six months or so—that's your game."

"I'm not going to report you," I said.

"Eight square feet of ground," he went on, disregarding my protest, and evidently working himself into a fury again. "Eight square feet, and I can't have that without being talked to and stared at, and—oh, blast the whole crew of you!" and he raised his two clinched hands above his head and shook them in passionate invective.

"You've got a curious idea of hospitality," I remarked, determined not to lose my temper, and saying almost the first thing that came to my tongue.

To my surprise the words had an extraordinary effect upon him. He seemed completely staggered at my assuming the proposition for which he had been so fiercely contending—namely, that the room in which he stood was his own.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I didn't mean to be rude. Won't you take a seat?" and he motioned toward a rough trestle, which formed the head-piece of his couch.

I sat down, rather astonished at the sudden change. I don't know that I liked Maloney better under this new aspect. The murderer had, it is true, disappeared for the nonce, but there was something in the smooth tones and obsequious

manner which powerfully suggested the witness of the queen, who had stood up and sworn away the lives of his companions in crime.

"How's your chest?" I asked, putting on my professional air.

"Come, drop it, doctor—drop it!" he answered, showing a row of white teeth as he resumed his seat upon the side of the bed. "It wasn't anxiety after my precious health that brought you along here; that story won't wash at all. You came to have a look at Wolf Tone Maloney, forger, murderer, Sydney-slider, ranger, and government peach. That's about my figure, ain't it? There it is, plain and straight; there's nothing mean about me."

He paused as if he expected me to say something; but as I remained silent, he repeated once or twice, "There's nothing mean about me."

"And why shouldn't I?" he suddenly yelled, his eyes gleaming and his whole satanic nature reasserting itself. "We were bound to swing, one and all, and they were none the worse if I saved myself by turning against them. Every man for himself, say I, and the devil take the luckiest. You haven't a plug of tobacco, doctor, have you?"

He tore at the piece of "Barrett's" which I handed him, as ravenously as a wild beast. It seemed to have the effect of soothing his nerves, for he settled himself down in the bed and reassumed his former deprecating manner.

"You wouldn't like it yourself, you know, doctor," he said: "it's enough to make any man a little queer in his temper. I'm in for six months this time for assault, and very sorry I shall be to go out again, I can tell you. My mind's at ease in here; but when I'm outside, what with the government and what with Tattooed Tom, of Hawkesbury, there's no chance of a quiet life."

"Who is he?" I asked.

"He's the brother of John Grimthorpe, the same that was condemned on my evidence; and an infernal scamp he was, too! Spawn of the devil, both of them! This tattooed one is a murderous ruffian, and he swore to have my blood after that trial. It's seven year ago, and he's following me yet; I know he is, though he lies low and keeps dark. He came up to me in Ballarat in '75; you can see on the back of my hand here where the bullet clipped me. He tried again in '76, at Port Philip, but I got the drop on him and wounded him badly. He knifed me in '79, though, in a bar at Adelaide, and that made our account about level. He's loafing round again now, and he'll let daylight into me—unless—unless by some extraordinary chance some one does as much for him." And Maloney gave a very ugly smile.

"I don't complain of *him* so much," he continued. "Looking at it in his way, no doubt it is a sort of family matter that can hardly be neglected. It's the government that fetches me.

When I think of what I've done for this country, and then of what this country has done for me, it makes me fairly wild—clean drives me off my head. There's no gratitude nor common decency left, doctor!"

He brooded over his wrongs for a few minutes, and then proceeded to lay them before me in detail.

"Here's nine men," he said; "they've been murdering and killing for a matter of three years, and maybe a life a week wouldn't more than average the work that they've done. The government catches them and the government tries them, but they can't convict; and why?—because the witnesses have all had their throats cut, and the whole job's been very neatly done. What happens then? Up comes a citizen called Wolf Tone Maloney; he says, 'The country needs me, and here I am.' And with that he gives his evidence, convicts the lot, and enables the beaks to hang them. That's what I did. There's nothing mean about me! And now what does the country do in return? Dogs me, sir, spies on me, watches me night and day, turns against the very man that worked so very hard for it. There's something mean about that, anyway. I didn't expect them to knight me, nor to make me colonial secretary; but, damn it! I did expect that they would let me alone!"

"Well," I remonstrated, "if you choose to break laws and assault people, you can't expect

it to be looked over on account of former services."

"I don't refer to my present imprisonment, sir," said Maloney, with dignity. "It's the life I've been leading since that cursed trial that takes the soul out of me. Just you sit there on that trestle, and I'll tell you all about it. and then look me in the face and tell me that I've been treated fair by the police."

I shall endeavor to transcribe the experience of the convict in his own words, as far as I can remember them, preserving his curious perversions of right and wrong. I can answer for the truth of his facts, whatever may be said for his deductions from them. Months afterward, Inspector H. W. Hann, formerly governor of the jail at Dunedin, showed me entries in his ledger which corroborated every statement. Maloney reeled the story off in a dull, monotonous voice, with his head sunk upon his breast and his hands between his knees. The glitter of his serpent-like eyes was the only sign of the emotions which were stirred up by the recollection of the events which he narrated.

You've read of Bluemansdyke (he began, with some pride in his tone). We made it hot while it lasted; but they ran us to earth at last, and a trap called Braxton, with a damned Yankee, took the lot of us. That was in New Zealand, of course, and they took us down to Dunedin, and there

they were convicted and hanged. One and all they put up their hands in the dock, and cursed me till your blood would have run cold to hear them—which was scurvy treatment, seeing that we had all been pals together; but they were a blackguard lot, and thought only of themselves. I think it is as well that they were hung.

They took me back to Dunedin Jail, and clapped me into the old cell. The only difference they made was, that I had no work to do and was well fed. I stood this for a week or two, until one day the governor was making his rounds, and I put the matter to him.

"How's this?" I said. "My conditions were a free pardon, and you're keeping me here against the law."

He gave a sort of a smile. "Should you like very much to get out?" he asked.

"So much," said I, "that unless you open that door I'll have an action against you for illegal detention."

He seemed a bit astonished by my resolution.

"You're very anxious to meet your death," he said.

"What d'ye mean?" I asked.

"Come here, and you'll know what I mean," he answered. And he led me down the passage to a window that overlooked the door of the prison. "Look at that!" said he.

I looked out, and there were a dozen or so rough-looking fellows standing outside the street,

some of them smoking, some playing cards on the pavement. When they saw me they gave a yell and crowded round the door, shaking their fists and hooting.

"They wait for you, watch and watch about," said the governor. "They're the executive of the vigilance committee. However, since you are determined to go, I can't stop you."

"D'ye call this a civilized land," I cried, "and let a man be murdered in cold blood in open day-light?"

When I said this the governor and the warder and every fool in the place grinned, as if a man's life was a rare good joke.

"You've got the law on your side," says the governor; "so we won't detain you any longer. Show him out, warder."

He'd have done it, too, the black-hearted villain, if I hadn't begged and prayed and offered to pay for my board and lodging, which is more than any prisoner ever did before me. He let me stay on those conditions; and for three months I was caged up there with every larrikin in the township clamoring at the other side of the wall. That was pretty treatment for a man that had served his country!

At last, one morning up came the governor again.

"Well, Maloney," he said, "how long are you going to honor us with your society?"

I could have put a knife into his cursed body,

and would, too, if we had been alone in the bush; but I had to smile, and smooth him and flatter, for I feared that he might have me sent out.

"You're an infernal rascal," he said; those were his very words, to a man that had helped him all he knew how. "I don't want any rough justice here, though; and I think I see my way to getting you out of Dunedin."

"I'll never forget you, governor," said I; and, by God! I never will."

"I don't want your thanks nor your gratitude," he answered; "it's not for your sake that I do it, but simply to keep order in the town. There's a steamer starts from the West Quay to Melbourne to-morrow, and we'll get you aboard it. She is advertised at five in the morning, so have yourself in readiness."

I packed up the few things I had, and was smuggled out by a back door, just before daybreak. I hurried down, took my ticket under the name of Isaac Smith, and got safely aboard the Melbourne boat. I remember hearing her screw grinding into the water as the warps were cast loose, and looking back at the lights of Dunedin as I leaned upon the bulwarks, with the pleasant thought that I was leaving them behind me forever. It seemed to me that a new world was before me, and that all my troubles had been cast off. I went down below and had some coffee, and came up again feeling better than I had done since the morning that I woke to find that cursed

Irishman that took me standing over me with a six-shooter.

Day had dawned by that time, and we were steaming along by the coast, well out of sight of Dunedin. I loafed about for a couple of hours, and when the sun got well up some of the other passengers came on deck and joined me. One of them, a little perky sort of fellow, took a good long look at me, and then came over and began talking.

"Mining, I suppose?" says he.

"Yes," I says.

"Made your pile?" he asks.

"Pretty fair," says I.

"I was at it myself," he says; "I worked at the Nelson fields for three months, and spent all I made in buying a salted claim which busted up the second day. I went at it again, though, and struck it rich; but when the gold wagon was going down to the settlements, it was stuck up by those cursed rangers, and not a red cent left."

"That was a bad job," I says.

"Broke me—ruined me clean. Never mind, I've seen them all hanged for it; that makes it easier to bear. There's only one left—the villain that gave the evidence. I'd die happy if I could come across him. There are two things I have to do if I meet him."

"What's that?" says I, carelessly.

"I've got to ask him where the money lies—they never had time to make away with it, and

it's *cachéd* somewhere in the mountains—and then I've got to stretch his neck for him, and send his soul down to join the men that he betrayed."

It seemed to me that I knew something about that *caché,* and I felt like laughing; but he was watching me, and it struck me that he had a nasty, vindictive kind of mind.

"I'm going up on the bridge," I said, for he was not a man whose acquaintance I cared much about making.

He wouldn't hear of my leaving him, though. "We're both miners," he says, "and we're pals for the voyage. Come down to the bar. I'm not too poor to shout."

I couldn't refuse him well, and we went down together; and that was the beginning of the trouble. What harm was I doing any one on the ship? All I asked for was a quiet life, leaving others alone and getting left alone myself. No man could ask fairer than that. And now just you listen to what came of it.

We were passing the front of the ladies' cabin, on our way to the saloon, when out comes a servant lass—a freckled currency she-devil—with a baby in her arms. We were brushing past her, when she gave a scream like a railway whistle, and nearly dropped the kid. My nerves gave a sort of a jump when I heard that scream, but I turned and begged her pardon, letting on that I thought I might have trod on her foot. I knew the game was up, though, when I saw her white

face, and her leaning against the door and pointing.

"It's him!" she cried; "it's him! I saw him in the court-house. Oh, don't let him hurt the baby!"

"Who is it?" asked the steward and half a dozen others in a breath.

"It's him—Maloney—Maloney, the murderer—oh, take him away—take him away!"

I don't rightly remember what happened just at that moment. The furniture and me seemed to get kind of mixed, and there was cursing, and smashing, and some one shouting for his gold, and a general stamping round. When I got steadied a bit, I found somebody's hand in my mouth. From what I gathered afterward, I concluded that it belonged to that same little man with the vicious way of talking. He got some of it out again, but that was because the others were choking me. A poor chap can get no fair play in this world when once he is down—still, I think he will remember me till the day of his death—longer, I hope.

They dragged me out on to the poop and held a damned court-martial—on *me,* mind you; *me,* that had thrown over my pals in order to serve them. What were they to do with me? Some said this, some said that; but it ended by the captain deciding to send me ashore. The ship stopped, they lowered a boat, and I was hoisted in, the whole gang of them hooting at me from

over the bulwarks. I saw the man I spoke of tying up his hand, though, and I felt that things might be worse.

I changed my opinion before we got to the land. I had reckoned on the shore being deserted, and that I might make my way inland; but the ship had stopped too near the Heads, and a dozen beach-combers and such like had come down to the water's edge and were staring at us, wondering what the boat was after. When we got to the edge of the surf the cockswain hailed them, and after singing out who I was, he and his men threw me into the water. You may well look surprised—neck and crop into ten feet of water, with sharks as thick as green parrots in the bush, and I heard them laughing as I floundered to the shore.

I soon saw it was a worse job than ever. As I came scrambling out through the weeds, I was collared by a big chap with a velveteen coat, and half a dozen others got round me and held me fast. Most of them looked simple fellows enough, and I was not afraid of them; but there was one in a cabbage-tree hat that had a very nasty expression on his face, and the big man seemed to be chummy with him.

They dragged me up the beach, and then they let go their hold of me and stood round in a circle.

"Well, mate," says the man with the hat, "we've been looking out for you some time in these parts."

"And very good of you, too," I answers.

"None of your jaw," says he. "Come, boys, what shall it be—hanging, drowning, or shooting? Look sharp!"

This looked a bit too like business. "No, you don't!" I said. "I've got government protection, and it'll be murder."

"That's what they call it," answered the one in the velveteen coat, as cheery as a piping crow.

"And you're going to murder me for being a ranger?"

"Ranger be damned!" said the man. "We're going to hang you for peaching against your pals; and that's an end of the palaver."

They slung a rope round my neck and dragged me up to the edge of the bush. There were some big she-oaks and blue-gums, and they pitched on one of these for the wicked deed. They ran the rope over a branch, tied my hands, and told me to say my prayers. It seemed as if it was all up; but Providence interfered to save me. It sounds nice enough sitting here and telling about it, sir; but it was sick work to stand with nothing but the beach in front of you, and the long white line of surf, with the steamer in the distance, and a set of bloody-minded villains round you thirsting for your life.

I never thought I'd owe anything good to the police; but they saved me that time. A troop of them were riding from Hawkes Point Station to Dunedin, and hearing that something was up,

they came down through the bush and interrupted the proceedings. I've heard some bands in my time, doctor, but I never heard music like the jingle of those traps' spurs and harness as they galloped out on to the open. They tried to hang me even then, but the police were too quick for them; and the man with the hat got one over the head with the flat of a sword. I was clapped on to a horse, and before evening I found myself in my old quarters in the city jail.

The governor wasn't to be done, though. He was determined to get rid of me, and I was equally anxious to see the last of him. He waited a week or so until the excitement had begun to die away, and then he smuggled me aboard a three-masted schooner bound to Sydney with tallow and hides.

We got far away to sea without a hitch, and things began to look a bit more rosy. I made sure that I had seen the last of the prison, anyway. The crew had a sort of an idea who I was, and if there'd been any rough weather, they'd have hove me overboard, like enough; for they were a rough, ignorant lot, and had a notion that I brought bad luck to the ship. We had a good passage, however, and I was landed safe and sound upon Sydney Quay.

Now just you listen to what happened next. You'd have thought they would have been sick of ill-using me and following me by this time—wouldn't you, now? Well, just you listen. It

seems that a cursed steamer started from Dunedin to Sydney on the very day we left, and got in before us, bringing news that I was coming. Blessed if they hadn't called a meeting—a regular mass-meeting—at the docks to discuss about it, and I marched right into it when I landed. They didn't take long about arresting me, and I listened to all the speeches and resolutions. If I'd been a prince there couldn't have been more excitement. The end of all was that they agreed that it wasn't right that New Zealand should be allowed to foist her criminals upon her neighbors, and that I was to be sent back again by the next boat. So they posted me off again as if I was a damned parcel; and after another eight-hundred-mile journey I found myself back for the third time moving in the place that I started from.

By this time I had begun to think that I was going to spend the rest of my existence traveling about from one port to another. Every man's hand seemed turned against me, and there was no peace or quiet in any direction. I was about sick of it by the time I had come back; and if I could have taken to the bush I'd have done it, and chanced it with my old pals. They were too quick for me, though, and kept me under lock and key; but I managed, in spite of them, to negotiate that *caché* I told you of, and sewed the gold up in my belt. I spent another month in jail, and then they slipped me aboard a bark that was bound for England.

This time the crew never knew who I was, but the captain had a pretty good idea, though he didn't let on to me that he had any suspicions. I guessed from the first that the man was a villain. We had a fair passage, except a gale or two off the Cape; and I began to feel like a free man when I saw the blue loom of the old country, and the saucy little pilot-boat from Falmouth dancing toward us over the waves. We ran down the Channel, and before we reached Gravesend I had agreed with the pilot that he should take me ashore with him when he left. It was at this time that the captain showed me that I was right in thinking him a meddling, disagreeable man. I got my things packed, such as they were, and left him talking earnestly to the pilot, while I went below for my breakfast. When I came up again we were fairly into the mouth of the river, and the boat in which I was to have gone ashore had left us. The skipper said the pilot had forgotten me; but that was too thin, and I began to fear that all my old troubles were going to commence once more.

It was not long before my suspicions were confirmed. A boat darted out from the side of the river, and a tall cove with a long black beard came aboard. I heard him ask the mate whether they didn't need a mud-pilot to take them up in the reaches, but it seemed to me that he was a man who would know a deal more about handcuffs than he did about steering, so I kept away from

him. He came across the deck, however, and made some remark to me, taking a good look at me the while. I don't like inquisitive people at any time, but an inquisitive stranger with glue about the roots of his beard is the worst of all to stand, especially under the circumstances. I began to feel that it was time for me to go.

I soon got a chance, and made good use of it. A big collier came athwart the bows of our steamer, and we had to slacken down to dead slow. There was a barge astern, and I slipped down by a rope and was into the barge before any one missed me. Of course I had to leave my luggage behind me, but I had the belt with the nuggets round my waist, and the chance of shaking the police off my track was worth more than a couple of boxes. It was clear to me now that the pilot had been a traitor, as well as the captain, and had set the detectives after me. I often wish I could drop across those two men again.

I hung about the barge all day as she drifted down the stream. There was one man in her, but she was a big, ugly craft, and his hands were too full for much looking about. Toward evening, when it got a bit dusky, I struck out for the shore, and found myself in a sort of marsh place, a good many miles to the east of London. I was soaking wet and half dead with hunger, but I trudged into the town, got a new rig-out at a slop-shop, and after having some supper, engaged a bed at the quietest lodgings I could find.

I woke pretty early—a habit you pick up in the bush—and lucky for me that I did so. The very first thing I saw when I took a look through a chink in the shutter was one of these infernal policemen standing right opposite and staring up at the windows. He hadn't epaulets nor a sword, like our traps, but for all that there was a sort of family likeness, and the same busybody expression. Whether they followed me all the time, or whether the woman that let me the bed didn't like the looks of me, is more than I have ever been able to find out. He came across as I was watching him, and noted down the address of the house in a book. I was afraid that he was going to ring at the bell, but I suppose his orders were simply to keep an eye on me, for after another good look at the windows he moved on down the street.

I saw that my only chance was to act at once. I threw on my clothes, opened the window softly, and, after making sure that there was nobody about, dropped out onto the ground and made off as hard as I could run. I traveled a matter of two or three miles, when my wind gave out; and as I saw a big building with people going in and out, I went in too, and found that it was a railway station. A train was just going off for Dover to meet the French boat, so I took a ticket and jumped into a third-class carriage.

There were a couple of other chaps in the carriage, innocent-looking young beggars, both of them. They began speaking about this and that,

while I sat quiet in the corner and listened. Then they started on England and foreign countries, and such like. Look ye now, doctor, this is a fact. One of them begins jawing about the justice of England's laws. "It's all fair and above-board," says he; "there ain't any secret police, nor spying, like they have abroad," and a lot more of the same sort of wash. Rather rough on me, wasn't it, listening to the damned young fool, with the police following me about like my shadow?

I got to Paris right enough, and there I changed some of my gold, and for a few days I imagined I'd shaken them off, and began to think of settling down for a bit of rest. I needed it by that time, for I was looking more like a ghost than a man. You've never had the police after you, I suppose? Well, you needn't look offended, I didn't mean any harm. If ever you had you'd know that it wastes a man away like a sheep with the rot.

I went to the opera one night and took a box, for I was very flush. I was coming out between the acts when I met a fellow lounging along in the passage. The light fell on his face, and I saw that it was the mud-pilot that had boarded us in the Thames. His beard was gone, but I recognized the man at a glance, for I've a good memory for faces.

I tell you, doctor, I felt desperate for a moment. I could have knifed him if we had been

alone, but he knew me well enough never to give me the chance. It was more than I could stand any longer, so I went right up to him and drew him aside, where we'd be free from all the loungers and theater-goers.

"How long are you going to keep it up?" I asked him.

He seemed a bit flustered for a moment, but then he saw there was no use beating about the bush, so he answered straight:

"Until you go back to Australia," he said.

"Don't you know," I said, "that I have served the government and got a free pardon?"

He grinned all over his ugly face when I said this.

"We know all about you, Maloney," he answered. "If you want a quiet life, just you go back where you came from. If you stay here, you're a marked man; and when you are found tripping it'll be a lifer for you, at the least. Free trade's a fine thing but the market's too full of men like you for us to need to import any."

It seemed to me that there was something in what he said, though he had a nasty way of putting it. For some days back I'd been feeling a sort of homesick. The ways of the people weren't my ways. They stared at me in the street; and if I dropped into a bar, they'd stop talking and edge away a bit, as if I was a wild beast. I'd sooner have had a pint of old Stringy-

bark, too, than a bucketful of their rot-gut liquors. There was too much damned propriety. What was the use of having money if you couldn't dress as you liked, nor bust in properly? There was no sympathy for a man if he shot about a little when he was half-over. I've seen a man dropped at Nelson many a time with less row than they'd make over a broken window-pane. The thing was slow, and I was sick of it.

"You want me to go back?" I said.

"I've my order to stick fast to you until you do," he answered.

"Well," I said, "I don't care if I do. All I bargain is that you keep your mouth shut and don't let on who I am, so that I may have a fair start when I get there."

He agreed to this, and we went over to Southampton the very next day, where he saw me safely off once more. I took a passage round to Adelaide, where no one was likely to know me; and there I settled, right under the nose of the police. I'd been there ever since, leading a quiet life, but for little difficulties like the one I'm in for now, and for that devil, Tattooed Tom, of Hawkesbury. I don't know what made me tell you all this, doctor, unless it is that being lonely makes a man inclined to jaw when he gets a chance. Just you take warning from me, though. Never put yourself out to serve your country; for your country will do precious little for you. Just you let them look after their own affairs; and if they find dif-

ficulty in hanging a set of scoundrels, never mind chipping in, but let them alone to do as best they can. Maybe they'll remember how they treated me after I'm dead, and be sorry for neglecting me. I was rude to you when you came in, and swore a trifle promiscuous: but don't you mind me, it's only my way. You'll allow, though, that I have cause to be a bit touchy now and again when I think of all that's passed. You're not going, are you? Well, if you must, you must; but I hope you will look me up at odd times when you are going your rounds. Oh, I say, you've left the balance of that cake of tobacco behind you, haven't you? No; it's in your pocket—that's all right. Thank ye, doctor, you're a good sort, and as quick at a hint as any man I've met.

A couple of months after narrating his experiences, Wolf Tone Maloney finished his term, and was released. For a long time I neither saw him nor heard of him, and he had almost slipped from my memory, until I was reminded, in a somewhat tragic manner, of his existence. I had been attending a patient some distance off in the country, and was riding back, guiding my tired horse among the boulders which strewed the pathway, and endeavoring to see my way through the gathering darkness, when I came suddenly upon a little wayside inn. As I walked my horse up toward the door, intending to make sure of my bearings before proceeding further, I heard the sound of a violent altercation within the little bar.

There seemed to be a chorus of expostulation or remonstrance, above which two powerful voices rang out loud and angry. As I listened, there was a momentary hush, two pistol shots sounded almost simultaneously, and with a crash the door burst open and a pair of dark figures staggered out into the moonlight. They struggled for a moment in a deadly wrestle, and then went down together among the loose stones. I had sprung off my horse, and, with the help of half a dozen rough fellows from the bar, dragged them away from one another.

A glance was sufficient to convince me that one of them was dying fast. He was a thick-set burly fellow, with a determined cast of countenance. The blood was welling from a deep stab in his throat, and it was evident that an important artery had been divided. I turned away from him in despair, and walked over to where his antagonist was lying. He was shot through the lungs, but managed to raise himself up on his hand as I approached, and peered anxiously up into my face. To my surprise, I saw before me the haggard features and flaxen hair of my prison acquaintance, Maloney.

"Ah, doctor!" he said, recognizing me. "How is he? Will he die?"

He asked the question so earnestly that I imagined he had softened at the last moment, and feared to leave the world with another homicide upon his conscience. Truth, however, compelled

me to shake my head mournfully, and to intimate that the wound would prove a mortal one.

Maloney gave a wild cry of triumph, which brought the blood welling out from between his lips. "Here, boys," he gasped to the little group around him. "There's money in my inside pocket. Damn the expense! Drinks round. There's nothing mean about me. I'd drink with you, but I'm going. Give the doc my share, for he's as good—" Here his head fell back with a thud, his eye glazed, and the soul of Wolf Tone Maloney, forger, convict, ranger, murderer, and government peach, drifted away into the Great Unknown.

I cannot conclude without borrowing the account of the fatal quarrel which appeared in the column of the *West Australian Sentinel.* The curious will find it in the issue of October 4, 1881:

"Fatal Affray.—W. T. Maloney, a well-know citizen of New Montrose, and proprietor of the Yellow Boy gambling saloon, has met with his death under rather painful circumstances. Mr. Maloney was a man who had led a checkered existence, and whose past history is replete with interest. Some of our readers may recall the Lena Valley murders, in which he figured as the principal criminal. It is conjectured that during the seven months that he owned a bar in that region, from twenty to thirty travelers were hocussed and made away with. He succeeded,

however, in evading the vigilance of the officers of the law, and allied himself with the bush-rangers of Bluemansdyke, whose heroic capture and subsequent execution are matters of history. Maloney extricated himself from the fate which awaited him by turning Queen's evidence. He afterward visited Europe, but returned to West Australia, where he has long played a prominent part in local matters. On Friday evening he encountered an old enemy, Thomas Grimthorpe, commonly known as Tattooed Tom, of Hawkes-bury. Shots were exchanged, and both were badly wounded, only surviving a few minutes. Mr. Maloney had the reputation of being not only the most wholesale murderer that ever lived, but also of having a finish and attention to detail in matters of evidence which has been unapproached by any European criminal. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*"

THE DEAD ARE SILENT

BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

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HE could endure the quiet waiting in the carriage no longer; it was easier to get out and walk up and down. It was now dark; the few scattered lamps in the narrow side street quivered uneasily in the wind. The rain had stopped, the sidewalks were almost dry, but the rough-paved roadway was still moist, and little pools gleamed here and there.

"Strange, isn't it?" thought Franz. "Here we are scarcely a hundred paces from the Prater, and yet it might be a street in some little country town. Well, it's safe enough, at any rate. She won't meet any of the friends she dreads so much here."

He looked at his watch. "Only just seven, and so dark already! It is an early autumn this year . . . and then this confounded storm! . . ." He turned his coat-collar up about his neck and quickened his pacing. The glass in the street lamps rattled lightly.

"Half an hour more," he said to himself, "then I can go home. I could almost wish—that that half-hour were over." He stood for a moment on

the corner, where he could command a view of both streets. "She'll surely come to-day," his thoughts ran on, while he struggled with his hat, which threatened to blow away. "It's Friday. . . . Faculty meeting at the University; she needn't hurry home." He heard the clanging of street-car gongs, and the hour chimed from a nearby church tower. The street became more animated. Hurrying figures passed him, clerks of neighboring shops; they hastened onward, fighting against the storm. No one noticed him; a couple of half-grown girls glanced up in idle curiosity as they went by. Suddenly he saw a familiar figure coming toward him. He hastened to meet her. . . . Could it be she? On foot?

She saw him, and quickened her pace.

"You are walking?" he asked.

"I dismissed the cab in front of the theatre. I think I've had that driver before."

A man passed them, turning to look at the lady. Her companion glared at him, and the other passed on hurriedly. The lady looked after him. "Who was it?" she asked, anxiously.

"Don't know him. We'll see no one we know here, don't worry. But come now, let's get into the cab."

"Is that your carriage?"

"Yes."

"An open one?"

"It was warm and pleasant when I engaged it an hour ago."

They walked to the carriage; the lady stepped in.

"Driver!" called the man.

"Why, where is he?" asked the lady.

Franz looked around. "Well, did you ever? I don't see him anywhere."

"Oh—" her tone was low and timid.

"Wait a moment, child, he must be around here somewhere."

The young man opened the door of a little saloon, and discovered his driver at a table with several others. The man rose hastily. "In a minute, sir," he explained, swallowing his glass of wine.

"What do you mean by this?"

"All right, sir. . . . Be there in a minute." His step was a little unsteady as he hastened to his horses. "Where'll you go, sir?"

"Prater—Summer-house."

Franz entered the carriage. His companion sat back in a corner, crouching fearsomely under the shadow of the cover.

He took both her hands in his. She sat silent. "Won't you say good evening to me?"

"Give me a moment to rest, dear. I'm still out of breath."

He leaned back in his corner. Neither spoke for some minutes. The carriage turned into the Prater Street, passed the Tegethoff Monument, and a few minutes later was rolling swiftly through the broad, dark Prater Avenue.

Emma turned suddenly and flung both arms around her lover's neck. He lifted the veil that still hung about her face, and kissed her.

"I have you again—at last!" she exclaimed.

"Do you know how long it is since we have seen each other?" he asked.

"Since Sunday."

"Yes, and that wasn't good for much."

"Why not? You were in our house."

"Yes—in your house. That's just it. This can't go on. I shall not enter your house again. . . . What's the matter?"

"A carriage passed us."

"Dear girl, the people who are driving in the Prater at such an hour, and in such weather, aren't noticing much what other people are doing."

"Yes—that's so. But some one might look in here, by chance."

"We couldn't be recognized. It's too dark."

"Yes—but can't we drive somewhere else?"

"Just as you like." He called to the driver, who did not seem to hear. Franz leaned forward and touched the man.

"Turn around again. What are you whipping your horses like that for? We're in no hurry, I tell you. Drive—let me see—yes—drive down the avenue that leads to the Reichs Bridge."

"The Reichsstrasse?"

"Yes. But don't hurry so, there's no need of it."

"All right, sir. But it's the wind that makes the horses so crazy."

Franz sat back again as the carriage turned in the other direction.

"Why didn't I see you yesterday?"

"How could I?" . . .

"You were invited to my sister's."

"Oh—yes."

"Why weren't you there?"

"Because I can't be with you—like that—with others around. No, I just can't." She shivered. "Where are we now?" she asked, after a moment.

They were passing under the railroad bridge at the entrance to the Reichsstrasse.

"On the way to the Danube," replied Franz. "We're driving toward the Reichs Bridge. We'll certainly not meet any of our friends here," he added, with a touch of mockery.

"The carriage jolts dreadfully."

"We're on cobblestones again."

"But he drives so crooked."

"Oh, you only think so."

He had begun to notice himself that the vehicle was swaying to and fro more than was necessary, even on the rough pavement. But he said nothing, not wishing to alarm her.

"There's a great deal I want to say to you today, Emma."

"You had better begin then; I must be home at nine o'clock."

"A few words may decide everything."

"Oh, goodness, what was that!" she screamed. The wheels had caught in a car-track, and the carriage turned partly over as the driver attempted to free it. Franz caught at the man's coat. "Stop that!" he cried. "Why, you're drunk, man!"

The driver halted his horses with some difficulty. "Oh, no—sir—"

"Let's get out here, Emma, and walk."

"Where are we?"

"Here's the bridge already. And the wind is not nearly as strong as it was. It will be nicer to walk a little. It's so hard to talk in the carriage."

Emma drew down her veil and followed him. "Don't you call this windy?" she exclaimed as she struggled against the gust that met her at the corner.

He took her arm, and called to the driver to follow them.

They walked on slowly. Neither spoke as they mounted the ascent of the bridge; and they halted where they could hear the flow of the water below them. Heavy darkness surrounded them. The broad stream stretched itself out in gray, indefinite outlines; red lights in the distance, floating above the water, awoke answering gleams from its surface. Trembling stripes of light reached down from the shore they had just left; on the other side of the bridge the river lost itself in the blackness of open fields. Thunder rumbled in the distance; they looked over to where

the red lights soared. A train with lighted windows rolled between iron arches that seemed to spring up out of the night for an instant, to sink back into darkness again. The thunder grew fainter and more distant; silence fell again; only the wind moved, in sudden gusts.

Franz spoke at last, after a long silence. "We must go away."

"Of course," Emma answered, softly.

"We must go away," he continued, with more animation. "Go away altogether, I mean—"

"Oh, we can't!"

"Only because we are cowards, Emma."

"And my child?"

"He will let you have the boy, I know."

"But how shall we go?" Her voice was very low. "You mean—to run away—"

"Not at all. You have only to be honest with him; to tell him that you cannot live with him any longer; that you belong to me."

"Franz—are you mad?"

"I will spare you that trial, if you wish. I will tell him myself."

"No, Franz, you will do nothing of the kind."

He endeavored to read her face. But the darkness showed him only that her head was turned toward him.

He was silent a few moments more. Then he spoke quietly: "You need not fear; I shall not do it."

They walked toward the farther shore. "Don't you hear a noise?" she asked. "What is it?"

"Something is coming from the other side," he said.

A slow rumbling came out of the darkness. A little red light gleamed out at them. They could see that it hung from the axle of a clumsy country cart, but they could not see whether the cart was laden or not, and whether there were human beings on it. Two other carts followed the first. They could just see the outlines of a man in peasant garb on the last cart, and could see that he was lighting his pipe. The carts passed them slowly. Soon there was nothing to be heard but the low rolling of the wheels as their own carriage followed them. The bridge dropped gently to the farther shore. They saw the street disappear into blackness between rows of trees. Open fields lay before them to the right and to the left; they gazed out into gloom indistinguishable.

There was another long silence before Franz spoke again. "Then it is the last time—"

"What?—" Emma's tone was anxious.

"The last time we are to be together. Stay with him, if you will. I bid you farewell."

"Are you serious?"

"Absolutely."

"There, now you see, it is you who always spoil the few hours we have together?—not I."

"Yes, you're right," said Franz. "Let's drive back to town."

She held his arm closer. "No," she insisted, tenderly, "I don't want to go back. I won't be sent away from you."

She drew his head down to hers, and kissed him tenderly. "Where would we get to if we drove on down there?" she asked.

"That's the road to Prague, dear."

"We won't go quite that far," she smiled, "but I'd like to drive on a little, down there." She pointed into the darkness.

Franz called to the driver. There was no answer; the carriage rumbled on, slowly. Franz ran after it, and saw that the driver was fast asleep. Franz roused him roughly. "We want to drive on down that street. Do you hear me?"

"All right, sir."

Emma entered the carriage first, then Franz. The driver whipped his horses, and they galloped madly over the moist earth of the road-bed. The couple inside the cab held each other closely as they swayed with the motion of the vehicle.

"Isn't this quite nice?" whispered Emma, her lips on his.

In the moment of her words she seemed to feel the cab mounting into the air. She felt herself thrown over violently, reached for some hold, but grasped only the empty air. She seemed to be spinning madly like a top, her eyes closed, suddenly she found herself lying on the ground, a great silence about her, as if she were alone, far away from all the world. Then noises began to

come into her consciousness again; hoofs beat the ground near her; a low moaning came from somewhere; but she could see nothing. Terror seized her; she screamed aloud. Her terror grew stronger, for she could not hear her own voice. Suddenly she knew what had happened; the carriage had hit some object, possibly a mile-stone; had upset, and she had been thrown out. Where is Franz? was her next thought. She called his name. And now she could hear her voice, not distinctly yet, but she could hear it. There was no answer to her call. She tried to get up. After some effort she rose to a sitting posture, and, reaching out, she felt something, a human body, on the ground beside her. She could now begin to see a little through the dimness. Franz lay beside her, motionless. She put out her hand and touched his face; something warm and wet covered it. Her heart seemed to stop beating—Blood?—Oh, what had happened? Franz was wounded and unconscious. Where was the coachman? She called him, but no answer came. She still sat there on the ground. She did not seem to be injured, although she ached all over. "What shall I do?" she thought; "what shall I do? How can it be that I am not injured? Franz!" she called again. A voice answered from somewhere near her.

"Where are you, lady? And where is the gentleman? Wait a minute, Miss—I'll light the lamps, so we can see. I don't know what's got

into the beasts to-day. It ain't my fault, Miss, sure—they ran into a pile of stones."

Emma managed to stand up, although she was bruised all over. The fact that the coachman seemed quite uninjured reassured her somewhat. She heard the man opening the lamp and striking a match. She waited anxiously for the light. She did not dare to touch Franz again. "It's all so much worse when you can't see plainly," she thought. "His eyes may be open now—there won't be anything wrong. . . ."

A tiny ray of light came from one side. She saw the carriage, not completely upset, as she had thought, but leaning over toward the ground, as if one wheel were broken. The horses stood quietly. She saw the milestone, then a heap of loose stones, and beyond them a ditch. Then the light touched Franz's feet, crept up over his body to his face, and rested there. The coachman had set the lamp on the ground beside the head of the unconscious man. Emma dropped to her knees, and her heart seemed to stop beating as she looked into the face before her. It was ghastly white; the eyes were half open, only the white showing. A thin stream of blood trickled down from one temple and ran into his collar. The teeth were fastened into the under lip. "No—no—it isn't possible," Emma spoke, as if to herself.

The driver knelt also and examined the face of the man. Then he took the head in both his hands and raised it. "What are you doing?"

screamed Emma, hoarsely, shrinking back at the sight of the head that seemed to be rising of its own volition.

"Please, Miss—I'm afraid—I'm thinking—there's a great misfortune happened—"

"No—no—it's not true!" said Emma. "It can't be true!— You are not hurt? Nor am I—"

The man let the head he held fall back again into the lap of the trembling Emma. "If only some one would come—if the peasants had only passed fifteen minutes later."

"What shall we do?" asked Emma, her lips trembling.

"Why, you see, Miss, if the carriage was all right—but it's no good as it is—we've got to wait till some one comes—" he talked on, but Emma did not hear him. Her brain seemed to awake suddenly, and she knew what was to be done. "How far is it to the nearest house?" she asked.

"Not much further, Miss—there's Franz-Josefsland right there. We'd see the houses if it was lighter—it won't take five minutes to get there."

"Go there, then; I'll stay here— Go and fetch some one."

"I think I'd better stay here with you, Miss. Somebody must come; it's the main road."

"It'll be too late; we need a doctor at once."

The coachman looked down at the quiet face, then he looked at Emma, and shook his head.

"You can't tell," she cried.

"Yes, Miss—but there'll be no doctor in those houses."

"But there'll be somebody to send to the city—"

"Oh, yes, Miss—they'll be having a telephone there, anyway! We'll telephone to the Rescue Society."

"Yes, yes, that's it. Go at once, run—and bring some men back with you. Why do you wait? Go at once. Hurry!"

The man looked down again at the white face in her lap. "There'll be no use here for doctor or Rescue Society, Miss."

"Oh, go!—for God's sake go!"

"I'm going, Miss—but don't get afraid in the darkness here."

He hurried down the street. " 'Twasn't my fault," he murmured as he ran. "Such an idea! to drive down this road this time o' night."

Emma was left alone with the unconscious man in the gloomy street.

"What shall I do now?" she thought. "It can't be possible—it can't." The thought circled dizzily in her brain—"It can't be possible." Suddenly she seemed to hear a low breathing. She bent to the pale lips—no—not the faintest breath came from them. The blood had dried on temple and cheek. She gazed at the eyes, the half-closed eyes, and shuddered. Why couldn't she believe it? . . . It must be true—this was Death! A shiver ran through her—she felt but one thing—"This is a corpse. I am here alone with a corpse!

—a corpse that rests on my lap!" With trembling hands she pushed the head away, until it rested on the ground. Then a feeling of horrible aloneness came over her. Why had she sent the coachman away? What should she do here all alone with this dead man in the darkness? If only some one would come—but what was she to do then if anybody did come? How long would she have to wait here? She looked down at the corpse again. "But I'm not alone with him," she thought, "the light is there." And the light seemed to her to become alive, something sweet and friendly, to which she owed gratitude. There was more life in this little flame than in all the wide night about her. It seemed almost as if this light was a protection for her, a protection against the terrible pale man who lay on the ground beside her. She stared into the light until her eyes wavered and the flame began to dance. Suddenly she felt herself awake—wide awake. She sprang to her feet. Oh, this would not do! It would not do at all—no one must find her here with him. She seemed to be outside of herself, looking at herself standing there on the road, the corpse and the light below her; she saw herself grow into strange, enormous proportions, high up into the darkness. "What am I waiting for?" she asked herself, and her brain reeled. "What am I waiting for? The people who might come? They don't need me. They will come, and they will ask questions—and I—why am I here? They will ask who I am—

what shall I answer? I will not answer them—I will not say a word—they cannot compel me to talk."

The sound of voices came from the distance.

"Already?" she thought, listening in terror. The voices came from the bridge. It could not be the men the driver was bringing with him. But whoever it was would see the light—and they must not see it, for then she would be discovered. She overturned the lantern with her foot, and the light went out. She stood in utter darkness. She could see nothing—not even him. The pile of stones shone dimly. The voices came nearer. She trembled from head to foot; they must not find her here. That was the only thing of real importance in all the wide world—that no one should find her here. She would be lost if they knew that this—this corpse—was her lover. She clasps her hands convulsively, praying that the people, whoever they were, might pass by on the farther side of the road, and not see her. She listens breathless. Yes, they are there, on the other side—women, two women, or perhaps three. What are they talking about? They have seen the carriage, they speak of it—she can distinguish words. "A carriage upset—" What else do they say? She cannot understand—they walk on—they have passed her— Ah—thanks—thanks to Heaven!—And now? What now? Oh, why isn't she dead, as he is? He is to be envied; there is no more danger, no more fear for him. But so much—so

much for her to tremble for. She shivers at the thought of being found here, of being asked, "Who are you?" She will have to go to the police station, and all the world will know about it—her husband—her child. She cannot understand why she has stood there motionless so long. She need not stay here—she can do no good here—and she is only courting disaster for herself. She makes a step forward— Careful! the ditch is here—she crosses it—how wet it is—two paces more and she is in the middle of the street. She halts a moment, looks straight ahead, and can finally distinguish the gray line of the road leading onward into darkness. There—over there—lies the city. She cannot see it, but she knows the way. She turns once more. It does not seem so dark now. She can see the carriage and the horses quite distinctly—and, looking hard, she seems to see the outline of a human body on the ground. Her eyes open wide. Something seems to clutch at her and hold her here—it is he—she feels his power to keep her with him. With an effort she frees herself. Then she perceives that it was the soft mud of the road that held her. And she walks onward—faster—faster—her pace quickens to a run. Only to be away from here, to be back in the light—in the noise—among men. She runs along the street, raising her skirt high, that her steps may not be hindered. The wind is behind her, and seems to push her along. She does not know what it is she flees from. Is it the pale

man back there by the ditch? No, now she knows, she flees the living, not the dead, the living, who will soon be there, and who will look for her. What will they think? Will they follow her? But they cannot catch up with her now, she is so far away, she is nearing the bridge, there is danger. No one can know who she was, no one can possibly imagine who the woman was who drove down through the country road with the dead man. The driver does not know her; he would not recognize her if he should ever see her again. They will not take the trouble to find out who she is. Who cares? It was wise of her not to stay—and it was not cowardly either. Franz himself would say it was wise. She must go home; she has a husband, a child; she would be lost if any one should see her there with her dead lover. There is the bridge; the street seems lighter—she hears the water beneath her. She stands there, where they stood together, arm in arm—when was it? How many hours ago? It cannot be long since then. And yet—perhaps she lay unconscious long, and it is midnight now, or near morning, and they have missed her at home. Oh, no—it is not possible. She knows that she was not unconscious, she remembers everything clearly. She runs across the bridge, shivering at the sound of her own steps. Now she sees a figure coming toward her; she slows her pace. It is a man in uniform. She walks more slowly, she does not want to attract attention. She feels the man's

eyes resting on her—suppose he stops her! Now he is quite near; it is a policeman. She walks calmly past him, and hears him stop behind her. With an effort she continues in the same slow pace. She hears the jingle of street-car bells—ah, it cannot be midnight yet. She walks more quickly—hurrying toward the city, the lights of which begin there by the railroad viaduct—the growing noise tells her how near she is. One lonely stretch of street, and then she is safe. Now she hears a shrill whistle coming rapidly nearer—a wagon flies swiftly past her. She stops and looks after it; it is the ambulance of the Rescue Society. She knows where it is going. "How quickly they have come," she thinks; "it is like magic." For a moment she feels that she must call to them, must go back with them. Shame, terrible, overwhelming shame, such as she has never known before, shakes her from head to foot—she knows how vile, how cowardly she is. Then, as the whistle and the rumble of wheels fade away in the distance, a mad joy takes hold of her. She is saved—saved! She hurries on; she meets more people, but she does not fear them—the worst is over. The noise of the city grows louder, the street is lighter, the skyline of the Prater street rises before her, and she knows that she can sink into a flood tide of humanity there and lose herself in it. When she comes to a street lamp she is quite calm enough now to take out her watch and look at it. It is ten minutes to nine. She

holds the watch to her ear—it is ticking merrily. And she thinks: "Here I am, alive, unharmed—and he—he—dead. It is Fate." She feels as if all had been forgiven—as if she had never sinned. And what if Fate had willed otherwise? If it were she lying there in the ditch, and he who remained alive? He would not have run away—but then he is a man. She is only a woman, she has a husband, a child—it was her right—her duty—to save herself. She knows that it was not a sense of duty that impelled her to do it. But what she has done was right—she had done right instinctively—as all good people do. If she had stayed she would have been discovered by this time. The doctors would question her. And all the papers would report it next morning; she would have been ruined forever, and yet her ruin could not bring him back to life. Yes, that was the main point, her sacrifice would have been all in vain. She crosses under the railway bridge and hurries on. There is the Tegethoff Column, where so many streets meet. There are but few people in the park on this stormy evening, but to her it seems as if the life of the city was roaring about her. It was so horribly still back there. She had plenty of time now. She knows that her husband will not be home before ten o'clock. She will have time to change her clothes. And then it occurs to her to look at her gown. She is horrified to see how soiled it is. What shall she say to the maid about it? And next morning the papers will

all bring the story of the accident, and they will tell of a woman who had been in the carriage, and who had run away. She trembled afresh. One single carelessness and she is lost, even now. But she has her latch-key with her; she can let herself in; no one will hear her come. She jumps into a cab and is about to give her address, then suddenly she remembers that this would not be wise. She gives any number that occurs to her.

As she drives through the Prater street she wishes that she might feel something—grief—horror—but she cannot. She has but one thought, one desire—to be at home, in safety. All else is indifferent to her. When she had decided to leave him alone, dead, by the roadside—in that moment everything seemed to have died within her, everything that would mourn and grieve for him. She has no feeling but that of fear for herself. She is not heartless—she knows that the day will come when her sorrow will be despair—it may kill her even. But she knows nothing now, except the desire to sit quietly at home, at the supper table with her husband and child. She looks out through the cab window. She is driving through the streets of the inner city. It is brilliantly light here, and many people hurry past. Suddenly all that she has experienced in the last few hours seems not to be true, it is like an evil dream; not something real, irreparable. She stops her cab in one of the side streets of the Ring, gets out, turns a corner quickly, and takes

another carriage, giving her own address this time. She does not seem able to think of anything any more. "Where is he now?" She closes her eyes and sees him on the litter, in the ambulance. Suddenly she feels that he is here beside her. The cab sways, she feels the terror of being thrown out again, and she screams aloud. The cab halts before the door of her home. She dismounts hastily, hurries with light steps through the house door, unseen by the concierge, runs up the stairs, opens her apartment door very gently, and slips unseen into her own room. She undresses hastily, hiding the mud-stained clothes in her cupboard. To-morrow, when they are dry, she can clean them herself. She washes hands and face, and slips into a loose housegown.

The bell rings. She hears the maid open the door, she hears her husband's voice, and the rattle of his cane on the hat-stand. She feels she must be brave now or it will all have been in vain. She hurries to the dining-room, entering one door as her husband comes in at the other.

"Ah, you're home already?" he asks.

"Why, yes," she replies, "I have been home some time."

"They evidently didn't hear you come in."

She smiles without effort. But it fatigues her horribly to have to smile. He kisses her forehead.

The little boy is already at his place by the table. He has been waiting some time, and has fallen asleep, his head resting on an open book.

She sits down beside him; her husband takes his chair opposite, takes up a paper, and glances carelessly at it. Then he says: "The others are still talking away there."

"What about?" she asks.

And he begins to tell her about the meeting, at length. Emma pretends to listen, and nods now and then. But she does not hear what he is saying, she feels dazed, like one who has escaped terrible danger as by a miracle; she can feel only this: "I am safe; I am at home." And while her husband is talking she pulls her chair nearer the boy's and lifts his head to her shoulder. Fatigue inexpressible comes over her. She can no longer control herself; she feels that her eyes are closing, that she is dropping asleep.

Suddenly another possibility presents itself to her mind, a possibility that she had dismissed the moment she turned to leave the ditch where she had fallen. Suppose he were not dead! Suppose —oh, but it is impossible—his eyes—his lips—not a breath came from them! But there are trances that are like death, which deceive even practised eyes, and she knows nothing about such things. Suppose he is still alive—suppose he has regained consciousness and found himself alone by the roadside—suppose he calls her by her name? He might think she had been injured; he might tell the doctors that there was a woman with him, and that she must have been thrown to some distance. They will look for her. The coachman will come

back with the men he has brought, and will tell them that she was there, unhurt—and Franz will know the truth. Franz knows her so well—he will know that she has run away—and a great anger will come over him. He will tell them her name in revenge. For he is mortally injured, and it will hurt him cruelly that she has left him alone in his last hour. He will say: "That is Mrs. Emma ——. I am her lover. She is cowardly and stupid, too, gentlemen, for she might have known you would not ask her name; you would be discreet; you would have let her go away unmolested. Oh, she might at least have waited until you came. But she is vile—utterly vile—ah!—"

"What is the matter?" asks the Professor, very gravely, rising from his chair.

"What? What?"

"Yes, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing." She presses the boy closer to her breast.

The Professor looks at her for a few minutes steadily.

"Didn't you know that you had fallen asleep, and—"

"Well?— And—"

"And then you screamed out in your sleep."

"Did I?"

"You screamed as if you were having a nightmare. Were you dreaming?"

"I don't know—"

And she sees her face in a mirror opposite, a face tortured into a ghastly smile. She knows it is her own face, and it terrifies her. She sees that it is frozen; that this hideous smile is frozen on it, and will always be there, all her life. She tries to cry out. Two hands are laid on her shoulders, and between her own face and the mirrored one her husband's face pushes its way in; his eyes pierce into hers. She knows that unless she is strong for this last trial all is lost. And she feels that she is strong; she has regained control of her limbs, but the moment of strength is short. She raises her hands to his, which rest on her shoulders; she draws him down to her, and smiles naturally and tenderly into his eyes.

She feels his lips on her forehead, and she thinks: "It is all a dream—he will never tell—he will never take revenge like that—he is dead—really dead—and the dead are silent—"

"Why did you say that?" she hears her husband's voice suddenly.

She starts. "What did I say?" And it seems to her as if she had told everything, here at the table—aloud before every one—and again she asks, shuddering before his horrified eyes, "What did I say?"

"The dead are silent," her husband repeats very slowly.

"Yes," she answers.

And she reads in his eyes that she can no longer hide anything from him. They look long and

silently at each other. "Put the boy to bed," he says at last. "You have something to tell me, have you not?"

"Yes—"

She knows now that within a few moments she will tell this man everything—this man, whom she has deceived for many years.

And while she goes slowly through the door, holding her boy, she feels her husband's eyes still resting on her, and a great peace comes over her, the assurance that now many things would be right again.

HOW THE REDOUBT WAS TAKEN

BY PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

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A FRIEND of mine, a soldier, who died in Greece of fever some years since, described to me one day his first engagement. His story so impressed me that I wrote it down from memory. It was as follows:

I joined my regiment on September 4th. It was evening. I found the colonel in the camp. He received me rather bruskly, but having read the general's introductory letter he changed his manner and addressed me courteously.

By him I was presented to my captain, who had just come in from reconnoitring. This captain, whose acquaintance I had scarcely time to make, was a tall, dark man, of harsh, repelling aspect. He had been a private soldier, and had won his cross and epaulettes upon the field of battle. His voice, which was hoarse and feeble, contrasted strangely with his gigantic stature. This voice of his he owed, as I was told, to a bullet which had passed completely through his body at the battle of Jena.

On learning that I had just come from college

at Fontainebleau, he remarked, with a wry face: "My lieutenant died last night."

I understood what he implied, "It is for you to take his place, and you are good for nothing."

A sharp retort was on my tongue, but I restrained it.

The moon was rising behind the redoubt of Cheverino, which stood two cannon-shots from our encampment. The moon was large and red, as is common at her rising; but that night she seemed to me of extraordinary size. For an instant the redoubt stood out coal-black against the glittering disk. It resembled the cone of a volcano at the moment of eruption.

An old soldier, at whose side I found myself, observed the color of the moon.

"She is very red," he said. "It is a sign that it will cost us dear to win this wonderful redoubt."

I was always superstitious, and this piece of augury, coming at that moment, troubled me. I sought my couch, but could not sleep. I rose, and walked about a while, watching the long line of fires upon the heights beyond the village of Cheverino.

When the sharp night air had thoroughly refreshed my blood I went back to the fire. I rolled my mantle round me, and I shut my eyes, trusting not to open them till daybreak. But sleep refused to visit me. Insensibly my thoughts grew doleful. I told myself that I had not a

friend among the hundred thousand men who filled that plain. If I were wounded, I should be placed in hospital, in the hands of ignorant and careless surgeons. I called to mind what I had heard of operations. My heart beat violently, and I mechanically arranged, as a kind of rude cuirass, my handkerchief and pocketbook upon my breast. Then, overpowered with weariness, my eyes closed drowsily, only to open the next instant with a start at some new thought of horror.

Fatigue, however, at last gained the day. When the drums beat at daybreak I was fast asleep. We were drawn up in ranks. The roll was called, then we stacked our arms, and everything announced that we should pass another uneventful day.

But about three o'clock an aide-de-camp arrived with orders. We were commanded to take arms.

Our sharpshooters marched into the plain. We followed slowly, and in twenty minutes we saw the outposts of the Russians falling back and entering the redoubt. We had a battery of artillery on our right, another on our left, but both some distance in advance of us. They opened a sharp fire upon the enemy, who returned it briskly, and the redoubt of Cheverino was soon concealed by volumes of thick smoke. Our regiment was almost covered from the Russians' fire by a piece of rising ground. Their bul-

lets (which besides were rarely aimed at us, for they preferred to fire upon our cannoneers) whistled over us, or at worst knocked up a shower of earth and stones.

Just as the order to advance was given, the captain looked at me intently. I stroked my sprouting mustache with an air of unconcern; in truth, I was not frightened, and only dreaded lest I might be thought so. These passing bullets aided my heroic coolness, while my self-respect assured me that the danger was a real one, since I was veritably under fire. I was delighted at my self-possession, and already looked forward to the pleasure of describing in Parisian drawing-rooms the capture of the redoubt of Cheverino.

The colonel passed before our company. "Well," he said to me, "you are going to see warm work in your first action."

I gave a martial smile, and brushed my cuff, on which a bullet, which had struck the earth at thirty paces distant, had cast a little dust.

It appeared that the Russians had discovered that their bullets did no harm, for they replaced them by a fire of shells, which began to reach us in the hollows where we lay. One of these, in its explosion, knocked off my shako and killed a man beside me.

"I congratulate you," said the captain, as I picked up my shako. "You are safe now for the day."

I knew the military superstition which believes that the axiom *"non bis in idem"* is as applicable to the battlefield as to the courts of justice. I replaced my shako with a swagger.

"That's a rude way to make one raise one's hat," I said, as lightly as I could. And this wretched piece of wit was, in the circumstances, received as excellent.

"I compliment you," said the captain. "You will command a company to-night; for I shall not survive the day. Every time I have been wounded the officer below me has been touched by some spent ball; and," he added, in a lower tone, "all the names began with P."

I laughed skeptically; most people would have done the same; but most would also have been struck, as I was, by these prophetic words. But, conscript though I was, I felt that I could trust my thoughts to no one, and that it was my duty to seem always calm and bold.

At the end of half an hour the Russian fire had sensibly diminished. We left our cover to advance on the redoubt.

Our regiment was composed of three battalions. The second had to take the enemy in flank; the two others formed a storming party. I was in the third.

On issuing from behind the cover, we were received by several volleys, which did but little harm.

The whistling of the balls amazed me. But

after all," I thought, "a battle is less terrible than I expected."

We advanced at a smart run, our musketeers in front.

All at once the Russians uttered three hurrahs—three distinct hurrahs—and then stood silent, without firing.

"I don't like that silence," said the captain. "It bodes no good."

I began to think our people were too eager. I could not help comparing, mentally, their shouts and clamor with the striking silence of the enemy.

We quickly reached the foot of the redoubt. The palisades were broken and the earthworks shattered by our balls. With a roar of "Vive l'Empereur," our soldiers rushed across the ruins.

I raised my eyes. Never shall I forget the sight which met my view. The smoke had mostly lifted, and remained suspended, like a canopy, at twenty feet above the redoubt. Through a bluish mist could be perceived, behind the shattered parapet, the Russian Grenadiers, with rifles lifted, as motionless as statues. I can see them still—the left eye of every soldier glaring at us, the right hidden by his lifted gun. In an embrasure at a few feet distant, a man with a fuse stood by a cannon.

I shuddered. I believed that my last hour had come.

"Now for the dance to open," cried the captain. These were the last words I heard him speak.

There came from the redoubts a roll of drums. I saw the muzzles lowered. I shut my eyes; I heard a most appalling crash of sound, to which succeeded groans and cries. Then I looked up, amazed to find myself still living. The redoubt was once more wrapped in smoke. I was surrounded by the dead and wounded. The captain was extended at my feet; a ball had carried off his head, and I was covered with his blood. Of all the company, only six men, except myself, remained erect.

This carnage was succeeded by a kind of stupor. The next instant the colonel, with his hat on his sword's point, had scaled the parapet with a cry of "Vive l'Empereur." The survivors followed him. All that succeeded is to me a kind of dream. We rushed into the redoubt, I know not how, we fought hand to hand in the midst of smoke so thick that no man could perceive his enemy. I found my sabre dripping blood; I heard a shout of "Victory"; and, in the clearing smoke, I saw the earthworks piled with dead and dying. The cannons were covered with a heap of corpses. About two hundred men in the French uniform were standing, without order, loading their muskets or wiping their bayonets. Eleven Russian prisoners were with them.

The colonel was lying, bathed in blood, upon

a broken cannon. A group of soldiers crowded round him. I approached them.

"Who is the oldest captain?" he was asking of a sergeant.

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders most expressively.

"Who is the oldest lieutenant?"

"This gentleman, who came last night," replied the sergeant calmly.

The colonel smiled bitterly.

"Come, sir," he said to me, "you are now in chief command. Fortify the gorge of the redoubt at once with wagons, for the enemy is out in force. But General C—— is coming to support you."

"Colonel," I asked him, "are you badly wounded?"

"Pish, my dear fellow. The redoubt is taken."

THE SLANDERER

BY ANTON CHEKHOV

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BY ANTON CHEKHOV

SERGEY KAPITONICH AKHINEYEV, the teacher of calligraphy, gave his daughter Natalya in marriage to the teacher of history and geography, Ivan Petrovich Loshadinikh. The wedding feast went on swimmingly. They sang, played, and danced in the parlor. Waiters, hired for the occasion from the club, bustled about hither and thither like madmen, in black frock coats and soiled white neckties. A loud noise of voices smote the air. From the outside people looked in at the windows—their social standing gave them no right to enter.

Just at midnight the host, Akhineyev, made his way to the kitchen to see whether everything was ready for the supper. The kitchen was filled with smoke from the floor to the ceiling; the smoke reeked with the odors of geese, ducks, and many other things. Victuals and beverages were scattered about on two tables in artistic disorder. Marfa, the cook, a stout, red-faced woman, was busying herself near the loaded tables.

"Show me the sturgeon, dear," said Akhineyev,

Translated by Herman Bernstein.

rubbing his hands and licking his lips. "What a fine odor! I could just devour the whole kitchen! Well, let me see the sturgeon!"

Marfa walked up to one of the benches and carefully lifted a greasy newspaper. Beneath that paper, in a huge dish, lay a big fat sturgeon, amid capers, olives, and carrots. Akhineyev glanced at the sturgeon and heaved a sigh of relief. His face became radiant, his eyes rolled. He bent down, and, smacking his lips, gave vent to a sound like a creaking wheel. He stood a while, then snapped his fingers for pleasure, and smacked his lips once more.

"Bah! The sound of a hearty kiss. Whom have you been kissing there, Marfusha?" some one's voice was heard from the adjoining room, and soon the closely cropped head of Vankin, the assistant school instructor, appeared in the doorway. "Whom have you been kissing here? A-a-ah! Very good! Sergey Kapitonich! A fine old man indeed! With the female sex tête-à-tête!"

"I wasn't kissing at all," said Akhineyev, confused; "who told you, you fool? I only—smacked my lips on account of—in consideration of my pleasure—at the sight of the fish."

"Tell that to some one else, not to me!" exclaimed Vankin, whose face expanded into a broad smile as he disappeared behind the door. Akhineyev blushed.

"The devil knows what may be the outcome of

this!" he thought. "He'll go about tale-bearing now, the rascal. He'll disgrace me before the whole town, the brute!"

Akhineyev entered the parlor timidly and cast furtive glances to see what Vankin was doing. Vankin stood near the piano and, deftly bending down, whispered something to the inspector's sister-in-law, who was laughing.

"That's about me!" thought Akhineyev. "About me, the devil take him! She believes him, she's laughing. My God! No, that mustn't be left like that. No. I'll have to fix it so that no one shall believe him. I'll speak to all of them, and he'll remain a foolish gossip in the end."

Akhineyev scratched his head, and, still confused, walked up to Padekoi.

"I was in the kitchen a little while ago, arranging things there for the supper," he said to the Frenchman. "You like fish, I know, and I have a sturgeon just so big. About two yards. Ha, ha, ha! Yes, by the way, I have almost forgotten. There was a real anecdote about that sturgeon in the kitchen. I entered the kitchen a little while ago and wanted to examine the food. I glanced at the sturgeon and for pleasure, I smacked my lips—it was so piquant! And just at that moment the fool Vankin entered and says—ha, ha, ha—and says: 'A-a! A-a-ah! You have been kissing here?'—with Marfa; just think of it—with the cook! What a piece of invention,

that blockhead. The woman is ugly, she looks like a monkey, and he says we were kissing. What a queer fellow!"

"Who's a queer fellow?" asked Tarantulov, as he approached them.

"I refer to Vankin. I went out into the kitchen—"

The story of Marfa and the sturgeon was repeated.

"That makes me laugh. What a queer fellow he is. In my opinion it is more pleasant to kiss the dog than to kiss Marfa," added Akhineyev, and, turning around, he noticed Mzda.

"We have been speaking about Vankin," he said to him. "What a queer fellow. He entered the kitchen and noticed me standing beside Marfa, and immediately he began to invent different stories. 'What?' he says, 'you have been kissing each other!' He was drunk, so he must have been dreaming. 'And I,' I said, 'I would rather kiss a duck than kiss Marfa. And I have a wife,' said I, 'you fool.' He made me appear ridiculous."

"Who made you appear ridiculous?" inquired the teacher of religion, addressing Akhineyev.

"Vankin. I was standing in the kitchen, you know, and looking at the sturgeon—" And so forth. In about half an hour all the guests knew the story about Vankin and the sturgeon.

"Now let him tell," thought Akhineyev, rubbing his hands. "Let him do it. He'll start to

tell them, and they'll cut him short: 'Don't talk nonsense, you fool! We know all about it.' "

And Akhineyev felt so much appeased that, for joy, he drank four glasses of brandy over and above his fill. Having escorted his daughter to her room, he went to his own and soon slept the sleep of an innocent child, and on the following day he no longer remembered the story of the sturgeon. But, alas! Man proposes and God disposes. The evil tongue does its wicked work, and even Akhineyev's cunning did not do him any good. One week later, on a Wednesday, after the third lesson, when Akhineyev stood in the teachers' room and discussed the vicious inclinations of the pupil Visyekin, the director approached him, and, beckoning to him, called him aside.

"See here, Sergey Kapitonich," said the director. "Pardon me. It isn't my affair, yet I must make it clear to you, nevertheless. It is my duty— You see, rumors are on foot that you are on intimate terms with that woman—with your cook— It isn't my affair, but— You may be on intimate terms with her, you may kiss her— You may do whatever you like, but, please, don't do it so openly! I beg of you. Don't forget that you are a pedagogue."

Akhineyev stood as though frozen and petrified. Like one stung by a swarm of bees and scalded with boiling water, he went home. On his way it seemed to him as though the whole

town stared at him as at one besmeared with tar— At home new troubles awaited him.

"Why don't you eat anything?" asked his wife at their dinner. "What are you thinking about? Are you thinking about Cupid, eh? You are longing for Marfushka. I know everything already, you Mahomet. Kind people have opened my eyes, you barbarian!"

And she slapped him on the cheek.

He rose from the table, and staggering, without cap or coat, directed his footsteps toward Vankin. The latter was at home.

"You rascal!" he said to Vankin. "Why have you covered me with mud before the whole world? Why have you slandered me?"

"How; what slander? What are you inventing?"

"And who told everybody that I was kissing Marfa? Not you, perhaps? Not you, you murderer?"

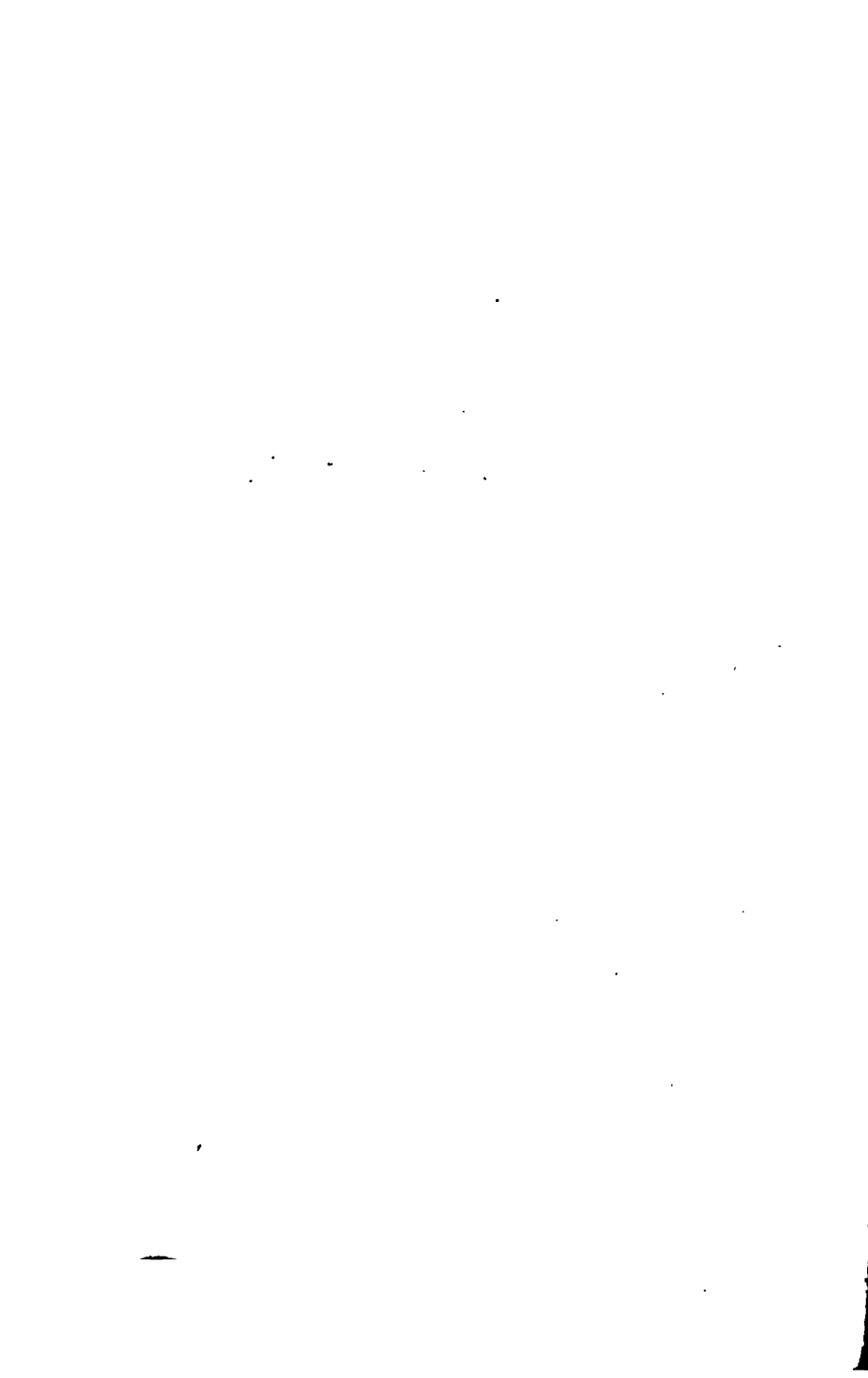
Vankin began to blink his eyes, and all the fibres of his face began to quiver. He lifted his eyes toward the image and ejaculated:

"May God punish me, may I lose my eyesight and die, if I said even a single word about you to any one! May I have neither house nor home!"

Vankin's sincerity admitted of no doubt. It was evident that it was not he who had gossiped.

"But who was it? Who?" Akhineyev asked himself, going over in his mind all his acquaintances, and striking his chest. "Who was it?"

THE DEAN'S WATCH

BY ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN

THE DEAN'S WATCH

BY ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN

I

ON THE day before Christmas of the year 1832, my friend Wilfred, with his double-bass slung over his back, and I, with my violin under my arm, started to walk from the Black Forest to Heidelberg. It was unusually snowy weather; as far as we could see across the great, deserted plain, there was no trace of road nor path. The wind kept up its harsh aria with monotonous persistency, and Wilfred, with his flattened wallet at his belt, and the vizor of his cap drawn over his eyes, moved on before me, straddling the drifts with his long, heron legs, and whistling a gay tune to keep up his spirits. Now and then, he would turn around with a waggish smile, and cry: "Comrade, let's have the waltz from 'Robin,' I feel like dancing." A burst of laughter followed these words, and then the good fellow would resume his march courageously. I followed on as well as I could, up to my knees in snow, and I felt a sense of melancholy take possession of me.

The spires of Heidelberg began to appear on

the extreme horizon, and we hoped to reach there before nightfall. It was then about five o'clock in the afternoon, and great flakes of snow were whirling through the gray atmosphere. Suddenly we heard the sound of a horse approaching from behind us. When the rider was within twenty yards of us, he moderated his speed, studying us meanwhile with a sidelong glance. We returned his gaze.

Picture to yourself a large man, with reddish hair and beard, in a three-cornered hat and loose fox-skin pelisse; his arms buried to the elbows in fur gloves. He carried a handsome valise behind him, resting on the haunches of his powerful stallion. He was evidently some alderman or burgomaster or personage of like importance.

"Ho! Ho! my good fellows!" he cried; "you are on your way to Heidelberg to perform, I see." Wilfred surveyed the traveler from the corner of his eye, and replied briefly: "Is that of any interest to you, sir?" "Yes, for in that case I wish to give you a bit of advice." "Advice?" "Precisely; if you wish it." Wilfred started on without replying. I noticed that the traveler's appearance was like that of an enormous cat; his ears wide apart, his eyelids half closed, with a bristling mustache, and a fatherly, almost caressing manner. "My friend," he continued, addressing himself to me, "frankly, you will do well to retrace your steps." "Why so, sir?" "The great Maestro Pimenti has just now announced a con-

cert to take place at Heidelberg on Christmas day. The entire city will be there, and you will not earn a kreutzer." At this point, Wilfred turned around ill-humoredly: "We care not a sou for your Maestro nor all the Pimentis in Christendom," he said; "look at this young fellow here, without even the sign of a beard on his chin! He has never yet played outside of the ale-houses of the Black Forest, for the woodcutters and charcoal-women to dance; and yet this boy, with his long yellow curls and big blue eyes, defies all your Italian impostors. His left hand is possessed of inimitable melody, grace, and suppleness, and his right of a power to draw the bow, that the Almighty rarely accords us mortals."

"Oh! ho! Indeed!" returned the other. "It is just as I tell you," Wilfred replied, and he resumed his pace, blowing on his fingers that were red with the cold. I saw that he was ridiculing the horseman, who continued to follow us at an easy trot. We continued thus for a full half mile in silence. Suddenly the stranger said to us abruptly: "Whatever skill you may possess, go back to the Black Forest; we have vagabonds enough in Heidelberg without you to increase the number. I give you good advice, particularly under the existing circumstances; you will do well to profit by it."

Wilfred, now thoroughly out of patience, was about to reply, but the traveler, urging his horse into a gallop, had already crossed the broad

Avenue d'Electeur. An immense flock of crows flew up from the plain and seemed to be following him, filling the heavens with their cawing. We reached Heidelberg at about seven o'clock, and we did indeed see Pimenti's magnificent posters on all the walls of the city, which read: "Grand Concert Solo."

That same evening in visiting the various inns, we met many old comrades from the Black Forest, who engaged us to play in their troupe. There was old Bremer, the 'cellist, his two sons, Ludwig and Karl, both good second violins; Heinrich Siebel, the clarionet player, and Bertha with her harp; Wilfred with his double-bass and I with my violin made up the number. We agreed to travel together after the Christmas concert and divide the proceeds among us. Wilfred had already hired a room for us both on the sixth floor of the Pied de Mouton Tavern, which stood halfway down the Holdergasse, and for it he was to pay four kreutzers a day. Properly speaking, it was nothing but a garret, but fortunately there was a stove in it, and we lighted a fire to dry ourselves.

As we were comfortably seated, toasting chestnuts over the fire and enjoying a jug of wine, little Annette, the housemaid, appeared in a black calico dress and velvet turban, with rosy cheeks and lips like a cluster of cherries. She came running up the stairs, gave a hasty knock and threw herself joyfully into my arms. I had known the

pretty little girl for a long time; we were of the same village, and if truth must be told, her sparkling eyes and frolicsome ways had quite won my heart. "I came up to have a little talk with you," she said, dropping into a chair. "I saw you come up a moment ago and here I am."

She began to chatter away, asking for this one or that one of the village and hardly giving me time to reply. Every now and then she would pause and look at me with the greatest tenderness. We might have continued thus until the next morning had not Dame Grédel Dick begun to call from the foot of the stairs: "Annette! Annette! Are you never coming?" "Right away, ma'am!" answered the poor child reluctantly. She tapped me lightly on the cheek and ran toward the door; but just as she was crossing the threshold, she suddenly stopped. "By the way," she cried, "I was forgetting to tell you; but perhaps you have heard about it?" "About what?" "The death of our precentor, Zahn." "But how does that affect us?" "To be sure; only see that your passport is all right. To-morrow morning at eight o'clock they will come to examine it. Everybody is being arrested in the last fortnight. The precentor was assassinated last night in the library of Saint Christopher's Chapel, and only a week ago, old Ulmet Elias, the sacrificer, was similarly murdered in the Rue des Juifs. Some days before that Christina Hâas, the old midwife, was also killed. as well as

the agate dealer Seligmann of the Rue Durlach. So look out for yourself, dear Kasper, and see that your passport is all right."

While she was speaking, Dame Grédel's voice came again from below: "Annette! will you come here? The good-for-nothing child, leaving me to do all the work!"

And the sound of men's voices calling for wine, beer, ham, or sausages mingled with her own. Further delay was out of the question. Annette hastened down the stairs, crying as she went: "Goodness, ma'am! what has happened? One would think that the house were afire!" Wilfred crossed the room and closed the door behind her; then returning to his chair, we looked at each other, not without a feeling of apprehension.

"That is singular news," he said; "your passport is all right, I suppose?" "Certainly." And I produced my papers. "Good! Mine is too, for I had it made out just before leaving. But nevertheless, these murders do not augur us any good. I am afraid we shall not be able to do much business here; many of the families will be in mourning; and then, too, the bother and pettifogging of the authorities." "Pshaw! you take too gloomy a view of it," I replied.

We continued to discuss these singular happenings until after midnight. The glow from our little stove lighted up the angle of the roof, the square window with its three cracked panes, the straw strewn about the floor, the blackened

beams propped against each other, and the little firwood table that cast its uncertain shadow upon the worm-eaten ceiling. From time to time, a mouse, enticed by the warmth, would dart like an arrow along the wall. The wind howled in the chimney and whirled the snow about the gutters. I was dreaming of Annette; the silence was complete. Suddenly Wilfred exclaimed, throwing off his jacket: "It is time for sleep. Put another stick on the fire and we will go to bed!" "We can't do better than that," I replied. So saying, I drew off my boots, and a moment later we stretched out on the straw with the coverlid tucked under our chins and a log under our heads for a pillow. Wilfred lost no time in getting to sleep. The light from the stove flickered and trembled; the wind redoubled its force outside, and as I lay thus with a sense of perfect contentment, I, too, dozed off. At about two o'clock in the morning I was awakened by a strange noise. I thought at first that it was a cat running along the gutter, but, putting my ear to the wall, my uncertainty was at once dispelled; somebody was walking on the roof. I nudged Wilfred. "Sh!" he whispered, pressing my hand; he had heard it, too. The firelight was casting its last shadows on the decrepit walls. I was considering whether I would get up or not, when the little window, held only by a bit of brick, slowly opened. A pale face with shining eyes, red hair, and quivering cheeks appeared in the opening and gazed into

the interior of the chamber. Our fear was so great that we hadn't strength left to cry out. At length the man glided through the sash and let himself down into the loft without a sound. The man, short and thick-set, the muscles of his face contracted like a tiger about to spring, was none other than the ingenuous person who had volunteered his advice on the road to Heidelberg. But how different he seemed to us now! In spite of the bitter cold, he was in his shirt sleeves, dressed only in a pair of breeches, woolen stockings, and silver buckled shoes. A long, blood-stained knife glittered in his hand.

Wilfred and I thought our last hour had surely come. But he did not appear to see us in the oblique shadow of the loft, notwithstanding that the fire started up again in the cold draft from the open window. He squatted down on a chair and began to shiver in a strange manner. Suddenly he fixed his yellowish-green eyes upon me; his nostrils dilated and he watched me for a full minute, while the blood froze in my veins. Then turning toward the stove, he gave a hoarse cough, like the purring of a cat, without moving a muscle of his face. He drew a large watch from his breeches pocket, made a gesture as if looking at the time, and either inadvertently or purposely laid it on the table. This done, he rose as if undecided, looked doubtfully at the window, hesitated, and finally disappeared through the door, leaving it wide open behind him. I sprang up to

turn the lock; already the man's footsteps creaked on the staircase two floors below. An irresistible curiosity asserted itself over my fear, and hearing a window open, which looked upon the court, I approached the sash of the little winding staircase on the same side of the house. The courtyard, from where I stood, lay at a dizzy depth, and a wall from fifty to sixty feet high divided it. On the right of the wall was the yard of a pork butcher; on the left, the inn yard of the Pied de Mouton. The top of this wall, which was overgrown with damp mosses and that sort of vegetation that thrives in dark places, extended in a straight line from the window, which the man had just opened, to the roof of a large, sombre-looking dwelling, built in the rear of the Bergstrasse.

I took all this in at a glance while the moon shone between the heavy, snow-laden clouds, and I shuddered as I saw the man flee along the wall, his head bent forward and the knife still in his hand, while the wind howled lugubriously around him. He reached the opposite roof and disappeared. I thought I must be dreaming. For some moments I stood there, open-mouthed with wonder, my breast bare, and hair tossed about, drenched by the sleet that fell from the roof. At length recovering from my bewilderment, I returned to the loft and found Wilfred, who looked at me with a haggard expression and was mumbling a prayer. I hastened to bolt the door, dress myself, and replenish the fire.

"Well," said my comrade, sitting up. "Well," I rejoined, "we have escaped this time, but if that fellow didn't see us, it was only because our time has not yet come." "You are right!" he cried. "He is one of the murderers Annette spoke of. Great Heavens! What a face! And what a knife!" And he fell back on the straw.

I emptied at a draft what wine still remained in the jug, and then, as the fire started up again, diffusing a grateful warmth through the chamber, and the lock appeared sufficiently strong, my courage began to revive. But the watch was still there and the man might return for it. The thought filled us with horror.

"Well, what is our next move?" asked Wilfred. "The best thing we can do is to strike out at once for the Black Forest." "Why so?" "I have no further desire to figure on the double-bass; you may do as you like." "Why should we leave? We have committed no crime." "Speak low!" he replied, "that one word 'crime' might hang us. We poor devils are made to serve as examples for others. They don't bother their heads much to find out whether we are guilty or not. If they should discover that watch here, it would be enough." "Look here, Wilfred! It won't do to lose your head! A crime has undoubtedly been committed in this neighborhood, but what should honest men do under the circumstances? Instead of running away from Justice, they should try to aid it." "How aid it?" "The simplest way

would be to take this watch to the bailiff and tell him what has passed." "Never! I wouldn't even dare to touch it!" "Very well, I will take it myself, but now let's go back to bed and try to get some more sleep if we can." "I don't care to sleep." "Well, light your pipe, then, and we will talk while we wait for daylight. Let's go downstairs, there may be some one there still." "I would rather stay here." "All right." And we sat down again before the fire.

As soon as dawn appeared, I took the watch from the table. It was a fine one with minute and second hands. Wilfred seemed somewhat reassured. "Kasper," he said, "on second thoughts, it seems more suitable for me to go to the bailiff. You are too young to take part in such matters. You would make a mess of it when you tried to explain the affair." "Just as you like," I replied. "Yes, it would look odd for a man of my years to send a mere child in my place." "Very good; I understand."

He took the watch, but I believe that only his pride drove him to this resolution. He would have been ashamed to show less courage than I before his comrades. We went down from the loft in a thoughtful mood. As we crossed the alleyway that comes out on the Rue Saint Christopher, we heard the clicking of glasses. I recognized the voice of old Bremer and his sons, Ludwig and Karl. "By Jove," said I, "it wouldn't be a bad idea to take a glass before we

start." I pushed open the door of the tap-room as I spoke, and we found all our company gathered there, their instruments variously deposited about the room. We were received with shouts of satisfaction and places were quickly made for us at the table. "Ho! Good morning, comrades," said Bremer; "more snow and wind. All the taverns are full of people, and every bottle that is opened means a florin in our pockets." I saw little Annette looking as fresh and fair as a rose, and smiling fondly at me with her lips and eyes. This sight reanimated me. It was I who got the daintiest morsels, and whenever she approached to set a glass of wine at my elbow, she touched me caressingly on the shoulder, and I thought, with a beating heart, of the days when we used to go chestnutting together. But in spite of this, the pale face of our strange visitor of the night before recurred to me from time to time, and made me tremble. I looked at Wilfred; he, too, seemed thoughtful.

Eight o'clock came and our party was about to start out, when the door was thrown open, and three big fellows, with lead-colored complexions, their eyes shining like rats, and their hats awry, appeared on the threshold, followed by several others of a like description. One of them, with a razor-back nose, and with a heavy club bound to his wrist, stepped forward, crying: "Your passports, gentlemen!" Each one hastened to comply with the request. Unfortunately, Wilfred, who

stood near the stove, was seized with a sudden trembling. The officer's experienced eye detected his agitation, and as he paused in his reading to give him a questioning look, my comrade conceived the unlucky idea of slipping the watch into his boot; but before it had reached its destination, the official slapped his hand against the other's hip, and said jeeringly: "Something seems to trouble you here." To everybody's amazement, Wilfred was seized with a fainting spell and dropped upon a bench pale as death. Without further ceremony, Madoc, the Chief of Police, pulled up his trousers' leg and drew out the watch with a burst of evil laughter. He had no sooner glanced at it, however, than he became sober, and, turning to his men, he cried in a terrible voice: "Let no one leave the room! We have caught the whole band at last! Look! this is the watch of Dean Daniel Van den Berg. Bring hither the handcuffs!" This order chilled us to the marrow. A tumult followed, and I, believing that we were lost, slid under a bench near the wall. As I was watching them chain the hands of poor old Bremer and his sons, Karl and Ludwig, together with Heinrich and Wilfred, I felt Annette's little hand brush against my cheek and she drew me gently toward her—slowly and quietly toward the open cellar door. I was unnoticed in the general confusion; I slipped within; the door closed behind me. It was but the matter of a second. Scarcely had I concealed myself,

before I heard my poor comrades depart; then all became silent.

I will leave you to imagine the nature of my reflections during an entire day, crouched down behind a wine cask with my legs gathered under me, and realizing that if a dog should enter the cellar, if the landlady should take the notion to come downstairs to fill a pitcher, if the cask should run out before night and were to be replaced; in short, if the slightest thing went amiss, it would be all up with me. All these thoughts and a thousand others passed through my mind, and I fancied that I already saw my comrades being led to execution. Little Annette, no less anxious than myself, closed the door prudently each time that she came up from the cellar. At last, I heard the old woman cry: "Leave the door open! Are you mad to lose half your time in shutting it?" After that the door remained ajar, and from my nook in the shadows I could see the tables gradually filling with new customers.

Stories, discussions, and exclamations concerning the famous band of robbers reached my ears. "Oh! the rascals!" cried one; "thank Heaven they are caught. What a scourge they have been to Heidelberg! No one dared risk himself in the streets after ten o'clock, and even business was beginning to suffer; but now things are changed and in a fortnight it will all be forgotten."

"Those musicians of the Black Forest are a lot of bandits!" chimed in another; "they make their

way into the houses under pretext of playing, and meanwhile they are examining the locks, bolts, chests, and windows, and some fine morning we hear that such a one has had his throat cut in his bed; that his wife has been murdered, his children strangled, and his house rifled from top to bottom. The wretches should be strung up without mercy! Then we might have some peace." "The whole village will turn out to see them hanged," said Mother Grédel, "and as for me, it will be the happiest day of my life." "Do you know, if it hadn't been for Dean Daniel's watch, no trace of them would have been found. Last night the watch disappeared, and this morning the Dean notified the police. An hour later, Madoc bagged them all! Ha! Ha! Ha!" The entire roomful burst out laughing, and I trembled with shame, indignation, and fear in turn.

Meanwhile, the night drew on. Only a few loungers remained. The people of the inn, who had sat up the night before, were anxious to get to bed. I heard the landlady yawn and mutter: "Oh, dear! How long before we can get some sleep?" Most of the tipplers comprehended the force of this remark and withdrew; only one remained, sitting half asleep before his glass. The watchman, going his rounds, woke him up and he went off grumbling and staggering.

"At last!" I said to myself; "this is good luck; Mother Grédel has gone to bed and Annette will not be slow in getting me out." With this agree-

able prospect in view, I had already stretched out my stiffened limbs, when Dame Grédel's voice reached my ear: "Annette, go and lock up, and don't forget to bolt the door! I am going down cellar." It appeared that this was a wise custom of hers to assure herself that everything was right. "But, madame," stammered the girl, "the cask isn't empty. You needn't bother to—" "Mind your own business," interrupted the mistress, whose candle was already lighting up the passageway. I had barely time to squat down again behind the cask, when the old woman, stooping beneath the low, dingy ceiling, passed from one keg to another, mumbling as she went: "Oh! the little wretch. How she lets the wine leak. I'll teach her to close the spigots tighter; did ever any one see the like?" The candle threw great shadows against the damp wall. I huddled closer and closer. Suddenly, just as I thought the visit happily ended, and was beginning to breathe easier again, I heard the old creature give a sigh so long and so full of woe that I knew something unusual was happening. I risked just the least glance, and I saw Dame Grédel Dick, her under jaw dropped and her eyes sticking out of her head, staring at the bottom of the barrel behind which I lay. She had caught sight of one of my feet underneath the joist that served as a wedge to keep the cask in place. She evidently believed she had discovered the chief of the robbers concealed there for the purpose of strangling her

during the night. I formed a sudden resolution. "Madame, for God's sake, have pity on me!" I cried: "I am—" Without looking at me, or listening to a word I said, she set up an ear-splitting shriek and started up the stairs as quickly as her great weight would permit. Seized with inexpressible terror, I clung to her skirt and went down on my knees. This only made matters worse. "Help! seize the assassin! Oh, my God! release me! Take my money! Oh! Oh!"

It was horrible. In vain did I cry: "Only look at me, my dear madame; I am not what you think me!" She was beside herself with fear; she raved and screamed in such piercing tones that had we not been underground, the whole neighborhood would inevitably have been aroused. In this extremity, consulting only my rage, I overturned her, and gaining the door before her, I slammed it in her face, taking care to slip the bolt. During the struggle the candle had been extinguished and Dame Grédel was left in the dark. Her cries grew fainter and fainter. I stared at Annette, giddy, and with hardly strength enough left to stand. Her agitation equaled mine. We neither of us seemed able to speak, and stood listening to the expiring cries of the mistress, which soon ceased altogether. The poor woman had fainted.

"Oh! Kasper," cried Annette, wringing her hands, "what is to be done? Fly! fly! You may have been heard! Did you kill her?" "Kill her? I?" "I am so glad! But fly! I will open the

door for you." She unbarred it, and I fled into the street, without stopping even to thank her; but I was so terrified and there was not a moment to lose. The night was inky black; not a star in the sky, and the street lamps unlighted. The weather was abominable; it was snowing hard and the wind howled dismally. Not until I had run for a good half-hour did I stop to take breath. Imagine my horror when I found myself directly opposite the Pied de Mouton Tavern. In my terror I had run around the square a dozen times for aught I knew. My legs felt like lead and my knees tottered under me.

The inn, but a moment before deserted, swarmed like a bee-hive, and lights danced about from window to window. It was evidently filled with the police. And now, at my wits' end, desperate, exhausted with cold and hunger, and not knowing where to find refuge, I resolved upon the strangest possible course. "By Jove," I said to myself, "as well be hanged as leave my bones on the road to the Black Forest." And I walked into the tavern with the intention of giving myself up to the officials. Besides the fellows with their cocked hats tilted rakishly over their ears, and the clubs fastened to their wrists, whom I had already seen in the morning, and who were now running here and there, and turning everything upside down, there was the bailiff, Zimmer, standing before one of the tables, dressed in black, with a grave air and penetrating glance, and near

him the secretary Roth, with his red wig, imposing countenance, and large ears, flat as oyster shells. They paid no attention to my entrance, and this circumstance altered my resolution at once. I sat down in a corner of the room behind the big cast-iron stove, in company with two or three of the neighbors, who had run hither to see what was going on, and I ordered a pint of wine and a dish of sauerkraut. Annette came near betraying me. "Goodness!" she cried, "is it possible!" But one exclamation, more or less, in such a babel of voices possessed but little significance. It passed unnoticed, and, while I ate with a ravenous appetite, I listened to the examination to which Dame Grédel was subjected as she lay back in a large armchair, her hair falling down and her eyes bulged out with fright. "How old did the man appear to be?" asked the bailiff. "Between forty and fifty, sir. He was an enormous man with black side whiskers, or maybe brown, I don't exactly remember, with a long nose and green eyes." "Did he have any birthmark or scars?" "I don't remember any. He only had a big hammer and pistols." "Very good! And what did he say to you?" "He seized me by the throat, but fortunately I screamed so loud it frightened him, and I defended myself with my finger-nails. When any one tries to murder you, you fight hard for your life, sir." "Nothing is more natural or legitimate, madame. Take this down, Roth! The coolness of this good

woman is remarkable." The rest of the deposition was in the same strain. They questioned Annette afterward, but she testified to having been so frightened that she could remember nothing.

"That will do," said the bailiff; "if we need anything further, we will return to-morrow morning." Everybody withdrew, and I asked Dame Grédel for a room for the night. So great had been her fear that she had not the slightest recollection of having seen me before. "Annette," said she, "Show the gentleman to the little room on the third floor. I can not stand on my legs. Oh! dear! what trials we have to bear in this world." She began to weep.

Annette, having lighted a candle, led me up to the little chamber, and when we found ourselves alone, she cried innocently: "Oh! Kasper, Kasper! Who would have believed that you were one of the band! I can never console myself for having loved a robber!" "What! you, too, believe us guilty, Annette?" I exclaimed despairingly, dropping into a chair; "that is the last straw on the camel's back." "No! no! you can not be. You are too much of a gentleman, dear Kasper! And you were so brave to come back." I explained to her that I was perishing with cold and hunger, and that that was the only consideration which led me to return.

We were left to ourselves for some time; then Annette departed, lest she should arouse Madame Grédel's suspicions. Left to myself, after hav-

ing ascertained that the windows were not approached by any wall, and that the sashes were securely fastened, I thanked God that I had thus far been brought safely through the perils which surrounded me, and then going to bed, I was soon fast asleep.

II

I got up at about eight o'clock the next morning. It was foggy and dark. As I drew aside the hangings of the bed, I noticed that the snow was drifted on a level with the windows; the sashes were all white. I began to reflect upon the sad condition of my companions; they must have suffered with the cold, particularly old Bremer and Bertha, and the idea filled me with sorrow. As I was reflecting thus, a strange noise arose outside. It drew near the inn, and I sprang anxiously to the window to see if some new dangers were threatening. They were bringing the famous band of robbers to confront Dame Grédel Dick, who was not yet sufficiently recovered from her fright to venture out of doors. My poor comrades came down the street between a double file of police, and followed by a crowd of street urchins, who screamed and yelled like savages. It seems to me that I can still see that terrible scene; poor Bremer chained between his sons, Ludwig and Karl, Wilfred behind them, and Bertha bringing up the rear and crying piteously: "In the name of Heaven, my masters,

have pity on a poor, innocent harpist! I kill? I steal? O God! can it be?" She wrung her hands distractedly. The others proceeded with bowed heads, their hair falling over their faces.

The crowd swarmed into the dark alleyway of the inn. The guards drove back the rabble, and the door was closed and barred. The eager crowd remained outside, standing ankle-deep in slush, with their noses flattened against the panes. A profound silence settled upon the house. Having by this time got into my clothes, I opened the door part way to listen, and see if it would be possible to escape from my unpleasant quarters. I heard the sound of voices and of people moving about on the lower floors, which convinced me that the passages were strongly guarded. My door opened on the landing, directly opposite the window through which the man had fled two nights before. I did not pay any attention to this circumstance at first, but as I stood there I suddenly noticed that the window was open, and that there was no snow on the sill; approaching it, I saw fresh tracks along the wall. I shuddered. The man must have returned last night; perhaps visited the inn every night. It was a revelation to me, and at once the mystery began to clear up.

"Oh! if it were only true," I said to myself, "that fortune had placed the murderer's fate in my hands, my unhappy fellows would be saved!" And I followed with my eyes the footprints, which led with surprising distinctness to the op-

posite roof. At this moment some words fell on my ear. The door of the dining hall had just been opened to let in the fresh air, and I heard the following conversation: "Do you recall having taken part in the murder of Ulmet Elias on the twentieth of this month?" Some unintelligible words followed. "Close the door, Madoc!" said the bailiff; "the woman is ill." I heard no more. As I stood with my head resting against the balusters, a sudden resolution seized me. "I can save my comrades!" I exclaimed; "God has pointed out to me the means, and if I fail to do my duty, their blood will be upon my head. My self-respect and peace of mind will be forever lost, and I shall consider myself the most cowardly of wretches." It took me some time, however, to summon up resolution enough. Then I went downstairs and entered the dining-room.

"Did you ever see this watch before?" the bailiff was saying to Dame Grédel. "Do your best to remember!" Without waiting for her answer, I stepped forward and replied firmly: "That watch, bailiff? I have seen it before in the hands of the murderer himself. I recognize it perfectly, and if you will only listen to me, I will agree to deliver the man into your hands this very night." Perfect stillness followed my bold declaration. The officials stared at each other, dumfounded; my comrades seemed to cheer up a bit. "I am the companion of these unfortunate people," I continued, "and I say it without shame,

for every one of them is honest, even if he is poor, and there is not one among them capable of committing the crimes imputed to him."

Again silence followed. Dame Bertha began to weep quietly. At last the bailiff aroused himself. Looking at me sharply, he said: "Where do you pretend to deliver the assassin into our hands?" "Right here in this very house! And to convince you of it, I only ask for a moment's private conversation." "Let us hear what you have to say," he replied, rising. He motioned Madoc to follow us; the others remained. We left the room. I went hastily up the stairs, with the others at my heels. Pausing at the window on the third floor, I showed them the man's footprints in the snow. "Those are the murderer's tracks!" I said; "he visits this house every night. Yesterday he came at two in the morning; last night he returned, and he will undoubtedly be back again this evening."

The bailiff and Madoc examined the footprints without a word. "How do you know that these are the murderer's tracks?" asked the chief of police, doubtfully. Thereupon I told him of the man's appearance in our loft. I pointed out to them the little window above us through which I had watched him as he fled in the moonlight, and which Wilfred had not seen, as he remained in bed. I admitted that it was mere chance that had led me to the discovery of the tracks made the night before.

"It is strange!" muttered the bailiff; "this greatly modifies the position of the accused. But how do you explain the presence of the robber in the cellar?" "That robber was myself." I now related briefly everything that had taken place from the time of my comrades' arrest until the moment of my flight from the inn. "That will do," said the bailiff; and, turning toward the chief of police, he added: "I must admit, Madoc, that the depositions of these musicians never seemed to me very conclusive of their guilt; moreover, their passports established an alibi difficult to controvert. Nevertheless, young man," turning to me, "in spite of the plausibility of the proofs you have given us, you must remain in our power until they are verified. Keep him in sight, Madoc, and take your measures accordingly." The bailiff descended the stairs thoughtfully, and, refolding his papers, he said, without continuing the examination: "Let the accused be taken back to the prison!" And with a scornful glance at the landlady, he departed, followed by the secretary. Madoc alone remained with two officials.

"Madame," he said to Dame Grédel, "maintain the strictest secrecy about what has happened, and give this brave young man the same room he occupied night before last." Madoc's look and emphasis admitted of no reply. Dame Grédel swore she would do whatever was required of her if she could only be rid of the robbers! Madoc replied: "We shall stay here all day

and to-night to protect you. Go about your work in peace, and begin by giving us some breakfast. My good fellow, you will give us the pleasure of dining with us?" My situation did not permit me to decline. I accepted accordingly, and we soon found ourselves seated before a leg of ham and a jug of Rhine wine. Other people arrived from time to time, and endeavored to elicit the confidence of Dame Grédel and Annette, but they maintained a discreet silence, for which they deserve no little credit. We spent the afternoon smoking our pipes and emptying our mugs; no one paid any attention to us.

The chief of police, in spite of his sallow face, piercing glance, pale lips, and sharp nose, was excellent company after a bottle or two; he told us some excellent stories, and at every word of his the other two burst out laughing. I remained gloomy and silent. "Come, young fellow!" he said with a smile, "forget for a little the death of your respectable grandmother. Take a drop, and put your troublesome thoughts to flight."

Others joined in the conversation, and the time passed in the midst of tobacco smoke, the clinking of glasses, and the ringing of mugs. But at nine o'clock, after the watchman's visit, the expression of things changed. Madoc rose and said: "Well, my friends, let us proceed to business. Fasten the doors and shutters quietly! You, ladies, may go to bed!" His two tattered followers looked more like robbers themselves

than like props of law and order. Each drew a club with a knob of lead attached to one end, from his trousers' leg, and Madoc tapped his breast pocket to make sure that his pistol was there. This done, he bid me lead them to the loft. We climbed the stairs. Having reached the little room, where thoughtful little Annette had taken care to light a fire, Madoc, cursing between his teeth, hastened to throw water on the coals; then motioning to the pile of straw, he said to me: "You may go to sleep if you like."

He sat down, together with his two acolytes, at the end of the room close to the wall, and they put out the light. I lay down on the straw, breathing a prayer to the Almighty to send hither the assassin. After midnight the silence became so profound that you would never have suspected three men were there with wide-open eyes, on the alert for the slightest sound. The hours wore slowly away. I could not sleep. A thousand terrible ideas teemed in my brain. One o'clock—two o'clock—three o'clock struck, and nothing appeared. At three o'clock one of the officials stirred slightly. I thought the man had come at last. But again all was still. I began to think that Madoc would take me for an impostor, and that in the morning things would fare badly with me; thus, instead of helping my companions, I should only be fettered with them.

The time seemed to me to pass very rapidly after three o'clock. I wished the night might last

forever, that the only ray of hope might not be gone. I was starting to go over all these thoughts for the fiftieth time, when, suddenly, without my having heard a sound, the window opened and two eyes glistened in the opening. Nothing stirred in the loft. "The others are asleep," I thought. The head remained in the opening, listening. The wretch seemed to suspect something. My heart galloped and the blood coursed through my veins. I dared not even breathe. A few moments passed thus. Then, suddenly, the man seemed to make up his mind. He let himself down into the loft with the same caution as on the preceding night. On the instant a terrible cry, short, piercing, blood-curdling, resounded through the house. "We've got him!"

The whole house shook from cellar to attic; cries, struggles, and hoarse shouts, coupled with muttered oaths, filled the loft. The man roared like a wild beast, and his opponents breathed painfully as they battled with his terrible strength. Then there was a crash that made the flooring creak, and I heard nothing more but a gritting of teeth and a rattle of chains. "A light here!" cried the formidable Madoc. And as the sulphur burned, illuminating the place with its bluish light, I vaguely distinguished the forms of the three officials kneeling above the prostrate man. One of them was holding him by the throat, another had sunk his knees into his chest, and Madoc encircled his wrists with handcuffs

hard enough to crush them. The man, in his shirt sleeves as before, seemed inert, save that one of his powerful legs, naked from the knee to the ankle, raised up from time to time and struck the floor with a convulsive movement. His eyes were literally starting from his head, and his lips were covered with a bloody foam. Scarcely had I lighted the taper when the officials exclaimed, thunderstruck: "Our Dean!" All three got up and stood staring at each other, white with astonishment. The bloodshot eyes of the murderer turned on Madoc. He tried to speak, and after a moment I heard him murmur: "What a terrible dream! My God, what a terrible dream!" Then he sighed and became motionless.

I approached to take a look at him. It was indeed the man who had given us advice on the road to Heidelberg. Perhaps he had had a presentiment that we would be the means of his destruction, for people do sometimes have these terrible borebodings. As he did not stir, and a tiny stream of blood flowed on the dusty floor, Madoc, rousing himself from his stupor, bent over him and tore away his shirt; we then saw that he had stabbed himself to the heart with his great knife. "Ho! ho!" cried Madoc, with a sinister smile, "our Dean has cheated the gallows. You others stay here while I go and notify the bailiff." He picked up his hat, that had fallen off during the mêlée, and left without another word. I remained opposite the corpse, with the two others.

The news spread like wildfire It was a sensation for the neighborhood. Dean Daniel Van den Berg enjoyed a fortune and a reputation so well established that many people refused to believe in the abominable instincts which dominated him. The matter was discussed from every conceivable point of view. Some held that he was a somnambulist and irresponsible for his acts; others that he was a murderer through love of blood, having no other possible motive for committing these crimes. Perhaps both were right, for it is an undeniable fact that moral being, will, soul, whatever name you choose to call it by, is wanting in the somnambulist. The animal nature left to itself naturally yields to the dictates of its pacific or sanguinary instincts. Be that as it may, my comrades were at once restored to liberty. Little Annette was quoted for a long time after as a model of devotion. She was even sought in marriage by the son of the burgomaster Trungott, a youth, who will one day disgrace his family.

As for me, I lost no time in returning to the Black Forest, where, since that time I have officiated as leader of the orchestra at the Sabre Vert Tavern, on the road to Tübingen. If you should ever happen to pass that way, and my story has interested you, come in and see me. We will drink a bottle or two together, and I will relate to you certain details that will make your hair stand on end.

THE BROKEN CUP

BY JOHANN HEINRICH DANIEL ZSCHOKKE

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.—There is extant under this name a short piece by the author of "Little Kate of Heilbronn." That and the tale which here follows originated in an incident which took place at Bern in the year 1802. Henry von Kleist and Ludwig Wieland, the son of the poet, were both friends of the writer, in whose chamber hung an engraving called *La Cruche Cassée*, the persons and contents of which resembled the scene set forth below, under the head of The Tribunal. The drawing, which was full of expression, gave great delight to those who saw it, and led to many conjectures as to its meaning. The three friends agreed, in sport, that they would each one day commit to writing his peculiar interpretation of its design. Wieland promised a satire; Von Kleist threw off a comedy; and the author of the following tale what is here given.

THAT Napoule is only a very little place on the bay of Cannes is true; yet it is pretty well known through all Provence. It lies in the shade of lofty evergreen palms, and darker orange trees; but that alone would not make it renowned. Still they say that there are grown the most luscious grapes, the sweetest roses, and the handsomest girls. I don't know but it is so; in the mean time I believe it most readily. Pity that Napoule is so small, and can not produce more luscious grapes, fragrant roses, and handsome maidens; especially, as we might then have some of them transplanted to our own country.

Translated by P. G.

As, ever since the foundation of Napoule, all the Napoulese women have been beauties, so the little Marietta was a wonder of wonders, as the chronicles of the place declare. She was called the little Marietta; yet she was not smaller than a girl of seventeen or thereabout ought to be, seeing that her forehead just reached up to the lips of a grown man.

The chronicles aforesaid had very good ground for speaking of Marietta. I, had I stood in the shoes of the chronicler, would have done the same. For Marietta, who until lately had lived with her mother Manon at Avignon, when she came back to her birthplace, quite upset the whole village. Verily, not the houses, but the people and their heads; and not the heads of all the people, but of those particularly whose heads and hearts are always in danger when in the neighborhood of two bright eyes. I know very well that such a position is no joke.

Mother Manon would have done much better if she had remained at Avignon. But she had been left a small inheritance, by which she received at Napoule an estate consisting of some vine-hills, and a house that lay in the shadow of a rock, between certain olive trees and African acacias. This is a kind of thing which no unprovided widow ever rejects; and, accordingly, in her own estimation, she was as rich and happy as though she were the Countess of Provence or something like it.

So much the worse was it for the good people of Napoule. They never suspected their misfortune, not having read in Homer how a single pretty woman had filled all Greece and Lesser Asia with discord and war.

. . . .

Marietta had scarcely been fourteen days in the house, between the olive trees and the African acacias, before every young man of Napoule knew that she lived there, and that there lived not, in all Provence, a more charming girl than the one in that house.

Went she through the village, sweeping lightly along like a dressed-up angel, her frock, with its pale-green bodice, and orange leaves and rosebuds upon the bosom of it, fluttering in the breeze, and flowers and ribbons waving about the straw bonnet, which shaded her beautiful features—yes, then the grave old men spake out, and the young ones were struck dumb. And everywhere, to the right and left, little windows and doors were opened with a "Good morning," or a "Good evening, Marietta," as it might be, while she nodded to the right and left with a pleasant smile.

If Marietta walked into church, all hearts (that is, of the young people) forgot Heaven; all eyes turned from the saints, and the worshiping finger wandered idly among the pearls of the rosary. This must certainly have provoked much sorrow, at least, among the more devout.

The maidens of Napoule particularly became very pious about this time, for they, most of all, took the matter to heart. And they were not to be blamed for it; for since the advent of Marietta more than one prospective groom had become cold, and more than one worshiper of some beloved one quite inconstant. There were bickerings and reproaches on all sides, many tears, pertinent lectures, and even rejections. The talk was no longer of marriages, but of separations. They began to return their pledges of troth, rings, ribbons, etc. The old persons took part with their children; criminations and strife spread from house to house; it was most deplorable.

Marietta is the cause of all, said the pious maidens first; then the mothers said it; next the fathers took it up; and finally all—even the young men. But Marietta, shielded by her modesty and innocence, like the petals of the rosebud in its dark-green calix, did not suspect the mischief of which she was the occasion, and continued courteous to everybody. This touched the young men, who said, "Why condemn the pure and harmless child—she is not guilty!" Then the fathers said the same thing; then the mothers took it up, and finally all—even the pious maidens. For, let who would talk with Marietta, she was sure to gain their esteem. So before half a year had passed, everybody had spoken to her, and everybody loved her. But she did not suspect that she was the object of such general regard,

as she had not before suspected that she was the object of dislike. Does the violet, hidden in the downtrodden grass, think how sweet it is?

Now every one wished to make amends for the injustice they had done Marietta. Sympathy deepened the tenderness of their attachment. Marietta found herself greeted everywhere in a more friendly way than ever; she was more cordially welcomed; more heartily invited to the rural sports and dances.

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All men, however, are not endowed with tender sympathy; some have hearts hardened like Pharaoh's. This arises, no doubt, from that natural depravity which has come upon men in consequence of the fall of Adam, or because, at their baptism, the devil is not brought sufficiently under subjection.

A remarkable example of this hardness of heart was given by one Colin, the richest farmer and proprietor in Napoule, whose vineyards and olive gardens, whose lemon and orange trees could hardly be counted in a day. One thing particularly demonstrates the perverseness of his disposition; he was twenty-seven years old, and had never yet asked for what purpose girls had been created!

True, all the people, especially damsels of a certain age, willingly forgave him this sin, and looked upon him as one of the best young men under the sun. His fine figure, his fresh, unem-

barrassed manner, his look, his laugh, enabled him to gain the favorable opinion of the aforesaid people, who would have forgiven him, had there been occasion, any one of the deadly sins. But the decision of such judges is not always to be trusted. While both old and young at Napoule had become reconciled to the innocent Marietta, and proffered their sympathies to her, Colin was the only one who had no pity upon the poor child. If Marietta was talked of he became as dumb as a fish. If he met her in the street he would turn red and white with anger, and cast sidelong glances at her of the most malicious kind.

If at evening the young people met upon the seashore near the old castle ruins for sprightly pastimes, or rural dances, or to sing catches, Colin was the merriest among them. But as soon as Marietta arrived the rascally fellow was silent, and all the gold in the world couldn't make him sing. What a pity, when he had such a fine voice! Everybody listened to it so willingly, and its store of songs was endless.

All the maidens looked kindly upon Colin, and he was friendly with all of them. He had, as we have said, a roguish glance, which the lasses feared and loved; and it was so sweet they would like to have had it painted. But, as might naturally be expected, the offended Marietta did not look graciously upon him. And in that she was perfectly right. Whether he smiled or not, it was all the same to her. As to his roguish glance, why

she would never hear it mentioned; and therein too she was perfectly right. When he told a tale (and he knew thousands) and everybody listened, she nudged her neighbor, or perhaps threw tufts of grass at Peter or Paul, and laughed and chattered, and did not listen to Colin at all. This behavior quite provoked the proud fellow, so that he would break off in the middle of his story and stalk sullenly away.

Revenge is sweet. The daughter of Mother Manon well knew how to triumph. Yet Marietta was a right good child and quite too tender-hearted. If Colin was silent, it gave her pain. If he was downcast, she laughed no more. If he went away, she did not stay long behind: but hurried to her home, and wept tears of repentance, more beautiful than those of the Magdalen, although she had not sinned like the Magdalen.

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Father Jerome, the pastor of Napoule, was an old man of seventy, who possessed all the virtues of a saint, and only one failing; which was, that by reason of his advanced years, he was hard of hearing. But, on that very account, his homilies were more acceptable to the children of his baptism and blessing. True, he preached only of two subjects, as if they comprehended the whole of religion. It was either "Little children, love one another," or it was "Mysterious are the ways of Providence." And truly there is so much Faith, Love, and Hope in these that one might

at a pinch be saved by them. The little children loved one another most obediently, and trusted in the ways of Providence. Only Colin, with his flinty heart, would know nothing of either: for even when he professed to be friendly, he entertained the deepest malice.

The Napoulese went to the annual market or fair of the city of Vence. It was truly a joyful time, and though they had but little gold to buy with, there were many goods to look at. Now Marietta and Mother Manon went to the fair with the rest, and Colin was also there. He bought a great many curiosities and trifles for his friends—but he would not spend a farthing for Marietta. And yet he was always at her elbow, though he did not speak to her, nor she to him. It was easy to see that he was brooding over some scheme of wickedness.

Mother Manon stood gazing before a shop, when she suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh! Marietta, see that beautiful cup! A queen would not be ashamed to raise it to her lips. Only see: the edge is of dazzling gold, and the flowers upon it could not bloom more beautifully in the garden, although they are only painted. And in the midst of this Paradise! pray see, Marietta, how the apples are smiling on the trees. They are verily tempting. And Adam cannot withstand it, as the enchanting Eve offers him one for food! And do see how prettily the little frisking lamb skips around the old tiger, and the

snow-white dove with her golden throat stands there before the vulture, as if she would caress him!"

Marietta could not satisfy herself with looking. "Had I such a cup, mother!" said she, "it is far too beautiful to drink out of: I would place my flowers in it and constantly peep into Paradise. We are at the fair in Vence, but when I look on the picture I feel as if I were in Paradise."

So spoke Marietta, and called her companions to the spot, to share her admiration of the cup: but the young men soon joined the maidens, until at length almost half the inhabitants of Napoule were assembled before the wonderfully beautiful cup. But miraculously beautiful was it mainly from its inestimable, translucent porcelain, with gilded handles and glowing colors. They asked the merchant timidly: "Sir, what is the price of it?" And he answered: "Among friends, it is worth a hundred livres." Then they all became silent, and went away in despair. When the Napoulese were all gone from the front of the shop, Colin came there by stealth, threw the merchant a hundred livres upon the counter, had the cup put in a box well packed with cotton, and then carried it off. What evil plans he had in view no one would have surmised.

Near Napoule, on his way home, it being already dusk, he met old Jacques, the Justice's servant, returning from the fields. Jacques was a very good man, but excessively stupid.

"I will give thee money enough to get something to drink, Jacques," said Colin, "if thou wilt bear this box to Manon's house, and leave it there; and if any one should see thee, and inquire from whom the box came, say 'A stranger gave it to me.' But never disclose my name, or I will always detest thee."

Jacques promised this, took the drink-money and the box, and went with it toward the little dwelling between the olive trees and the African acacias.

. . . .

Before he arrived there he encountered his master, Justice Hautmartin, who asked: "Jacques, what art thou carrying?"

"A box for Mother Manon. But, sir, I cannot say from whom it comes."

"Why not?"

"Because Colin would always detest me."

"It is well that thou canst keep a secret. But it is already late; give me the box, for I am going to-morrow to see Mother Manon; I will deliver it to her and not betray that it came from Colin. It will save thee a walk, and furnish me a good excuse for calling on the old lady."

Jacques gave the box to his master, whom he was accustomed to obey implicitly in all things. The justice bore it into his chamber, and examined it by the light with some curiosity. On the lid was neatly written with red chalk: "For the lovely and dear Marietta." But Monsieur

Hautmartin well knew that this was some of Colin's mischief, and that some knavish trick lurked under the whole. He therefore opened the box carefully for fear that a mouse or rat should be concealed within. When he beheld the wondrous cup, which he had seen at Vence, he was dreadfully shocked, for Monsieur Hautmartin was a skilful casuist, and knew that the inventions and devices of the human heart are evil from our youth upward. He saw at once that Colin designed this cup as a means of bringing misfortune upon Marietta: perhaps to give out, when it should be in her possession, that it was the present of some successful lover in the town, or the like, so that all decent people would thereafter keep aloof from Marietta. Therefore Monsieur Hautmartin resolved, in order to prevent any evil reports, to profess himself the giver. Moreover, he loved Marietta, and would gladly have seen her observe more strictly toward himself the sayings of the gray-headed priest Jerome, "Little children, love one another." In truth, Monsieur Hautmartin was a little child of fifty years old, and Marietta did not think the saying applied particularly to him. Mother Manon, on the contrary, thought that the justice was a clever little child, he had gold and a high reputation from one end of Napoule to the other. And when the justice spoke of marriage, and Marietta ran away in affright, Mother Manon remained sitting, and had no fear for the tall,

staid gentleman. It must also be confessed there were no faults in his person. And although Colin might be the handsomest man in the village, yet the justice far surpassed him in two things, namely, in the number of years, and in a very, very big nose. Yes, this nose, which always went before the justice like a herald to proclaim his approach, was a real elephant among human noses.

With this proboscis, his good purpose, and the cup, the justice went the following morning to the house between the olive trees and the African acacias.

"For the beautiful Marietta," said he, "I hold nothing too costly. Yesterday you admired the cup at Vence; to-day allow me, lovely Marietta, to lay it and my devoted heart at your feet."

Manon and Marietta were transported beyond measure when they beheld the cup. Manon's eyes glistened with delight, but Marietta turned and said: "I can neither take your heart nor your cup."

Then Mother Manon was angry, and cried out: "But I accept both heart and cup. Oh, thou little fool, how long wilt thou despise thy good fortune! For whom dost thou tarry? Will a count of Provence make thee his bride, that thou scornest the Justice of Napoule? I know better how to look after my interests. Monsieur Hautmartin, I deem it an honor to call thee my son-in-law."

Then Marietta went out and wept bitterly, and hated the beautiful cup with all her heart.

But the justice, drawing the palm of his flabby hand over his nose, spoke thus judiciously:

"Mother Manon, hurry nothing. The dove will at length, when it learns to know me better, give way. I am not impetuous. I have some skill among women, and before a quarter of a year passes by I will insinuate myself into Marietta's good graces."

"Thy nose is too large for that," whispered Marietta, who listened outside the door and laughed to herself. In fact, the quarter of a year passed by and Monsieur Hautmartin had not yet pierced the heart even with the tip of his nose.

During this quarter of a year Marietta had other affairs to attend to. The cup gave her much vexation and trouble, and something else besides.

For a fortnight nothing else was talked of in Napoule, and every one said it is a present from the justice, and the marriage is already agreed upon. Marietta solemnly declared to all her companions that she would rather plunge to the bottom of the sea than marry the justice, but the maidens continued to banter her all the more, saying: "Oh, how blissful it must be to repose in the shadow of his nose!" This was her first vexation.

Then Mother Manon had the cruelty to force Marietta to rinse out the cup every morning at the spring under the rock and to fill it with fresh

flowers. She hoped by this to accustom Marietta to the cup and heart of the giver. But Marietta continued to hate both the gift and giver, and her work at the spring became an actual punishment. Second vexation.

Then, when in the morning, she came to the spring, twice every week she found on the rock, immediately over it, some most beautiful flowers, handsomely arranged, all ready for the decoration of the cup. And on the flower-stalks a strip of paper was always tied, on which was written, "Dear Marietta." Now no one need expect to impose upon little Marietta as if magicians and fairies were still in the world. Consequently she knew that both the flowers and papers must have come from Monsieur Hautmartin. Marietta, indeed, would not smell them because the living breath from out of the justice's nose had perfumed them. Nevertheless she took the flowers, because they were finer than wild flowers, and tore the slip of paper into a thousand pieces, which she strewed upon the spot where the flowers usually lay. But this did not vex Justice Hautmartin, whose love was unparalleled in its kind as his nose was in its kind. Third vexation.

At length it came out in conversation with Monsieur Hautmartin that he was not the giver of the beautiful flowers. Then who could it be? Marietta was utterly astounded at the unexpected discovery. Thenceforth she took the flowers from the rock more kindly; but, further, Marietta was

—what maidens are not wont to be—very inquisitive. She conjectured first this and then that young man in Napoule. Yet her conjectures were in vain. She looked and listened far into the night; she rose earlier than usual. But she looked and listened in vain. And still twice a week in the morning the miraculous flowers lay upon the rock, and upon the strip of paper wound round them she always read the silent sigh, "Dear Marietta!" Such an incident would have made even the most indifferent inquisitive. But curiosity at length became a burning pain. Fourth vexation.

. . . .

Now Father Jerome, on Sunday, had again preached from the text: "Mysterious are the dispensations of Providence." And little Marietta thought, if Providence would only dispense that I might at length find out who is the flower dispenser. Father Jerome was never wrong.

On a summer night, when it was far too warm to rest, Marietta awoke very early, and could not resume her sleep. Therefore she sprang joyously from her couch as the first streaks of dawn flashed against the window of her little chamber, over the waves of the sea and the Lerinian Isles, dressed herself, and went out to wash her forehead, breast, and arms in the cool spring. She took her hat with her, intending to take a walk by the seashore, as she knew of a retired place for bathing.

In order to reach this retired spot, it was

necessary to pass over the rocks behind the house, and thence down through the orange and palm trees. On this occasion Marietta could not pass through them; for, under the youngest and most slender of the palms lay a tall young man in profound sleep—near him a nosegay of most splendid flowers. A white paper lay thereon, from which probably a sigh was again breathing. How could Marietta get by there?

She stood still, trembling with fright. She would go home again. Hardly had she retreated a couple of steps, ere she looked again at the sleeper and remained motionless. Yet the distance prevented her from recognizing his face. Now the mystery was to be solved, or never. She tripped lightly nearer to the palms; but he seemed to stir—then she ran again toward the cottage. His movements were but the fearful imaginings of Marietta. Now she returned again on her way toward the palms; but his sleep might perhaps be only dissembled—swiftly she ran toward the cottage—but who would flee for a mere probability? She trod more boldly the path toward the palms.

With these fluctuations of her timid and joyous spirit, between fright and curiosity, with these to-and-fro trippings between the house and the palm-trees, she at length nearly approached the sleeper; at the same time curiosity became more powerful than fear.

"What is he to me? My way leads me directly

past him. Whether he sleeps or wakes, I will go straight on." So thought Manon's daughter. But she passed not by, but stood looking directly in the face of the flower-giver, in order to be certain who it was. Besides, he slept as if it were the first time in a month. And who was it? Now, who else should it be but the archwicked Colin.

So it was *he* who had annoyed the gentle maiden, and given her so much trouble with Monsieur Hautmartin, because he bore a grudge against her; he had been the one who had teased her with flowers, in order to torture her curiosity. Wherefore? He hated Marietta. He behaved himself always most shamefully toward the poor child. He avoided her when he could; and when he could not, he grieved the good-natured little one. With all the other maidens of Napoule he was more chatty, friendly, courteous, than toward Marietta. Consider—he had never once asked her to dance, and yet she danced bewitchingly.

Now there he lay, surprised, taken in the act. Revenge swelled in Marietta's bosom. What disgrace could she subject him to? She took the nosegay, unloosened it, strewed his present over the sleeper in scorn. But the paper, on which appeared again the sigh, "Dear Marietta!" she retained, and thrust quickly into her bosom. She wished to preserve this proof of his handwriting. Marietta was sly. Now she would go away. But her revenge was not yet satisfied. She could not leave the place without returning Colin's ill-will.

She took the violet-colored silken ribbon from her hat, and threw it lightly around the sleeper's arm and around the tree, and with three knots tied Colin fast. Now when he awoke, how astonished he would be! How his curiosity would torment him to ascertain who had played him this trick! He could not possibly know. So much the better; it served him right. She seemed to regret her work when she had finished it. Her bosom throbbed impetuously. Indeed, I believe that a little tear filled her eye, as she compassionately gazed upon the guilty one. Slowly she retreated to the orange grove by the rocks—she looked around often—slowly ascended the rocks, looking down among the palm trees as she ascended. Then she hastened to Mother Manon, who was calling her.

. . . .

That very day Colin practised new mischief. What did he? He wished to shame the poor Marietta publicly. Ah! she never thought that every one in Napoule knew her violet-colored ribbon! Colin remembered it but too well. Proudly he bound it around his hat, and exhibited it to the gaze of all the world as a conquest. And male and female cried out: "He has received it from Marietta."—And all the maidens said angrily: "The reprobate!" And all the young men who liked to see Marietta cried out: "The reprobate!"

"How! Mother Manon?" shrieked the Justice Hautmartin when he came to her house, and

he shrieked so loudly that it reechoed wonderfully through his nose. "How! do you suffer this? my betrothed presents the young proprietor Colin with her hat-band! It is high time that we celebrate our nuptials. When that is over, then I shall have a right to speak."

"You have a right!" answered Mother Manon, "if things are so, the marriage must take place forthwith. When that is done, all will go right."

"But, Mother Manon, Marietta always refuses to give me her consent."

"Prepare the marriage feast."

"But she will not even look kindly at me; and when I seat myself at her side, the little savage jumps up and runs away."

"Justice, only prepare the marriage feast."

"But if Marietta resists—"

"We will take her by surprise. We will go to Father Jerome on Monday morning early, and he shall quietly celebrate the marriage. This we can easily accomplished with him. I am her mother, you the first judicial person in Napoule. He must obey. Marietta need know nothing about it. Early on Monday morning I will send her to Father Jerome all alone, with a message so that she will suspect nothing. Then the priest shall speak earnestly to her. Half an hour afterward we two will come. Then swiftly to the altar. And even if Marietta should then say No, what does it matter? The old priest can hear

nothing. But till then, mum to Marrietta and all Napoule."

So the secret remained with the two. Marietta dreamed not of the good luck which was in store for her. She thought only of Colin's wickedness, which had made her the common talk of the whole place. Oh! how she repented her heedlessness about the ribbon; and yet in her heart she forgave the reprobate his crime. Marietta was far too good. She told her mother, she told all her playmates: "Colin has found my lost band. I never gave it to him. He only wishes to vex me with it. You all know that Colin was always ill-disposed toward me, and always sought to mortify me!"

Ah! the poor child! she knew not what new abomination the malicious fellow was again contriving.

. . . .

Early in the morning Marietta went to the spring with the cup. There were no flowers yet on the rock. It was still much too early; for the sun had scarcely risen from the sea.

Footsteps were heard. Colin came in sight, the flowers in his hand. Marietta became very red. Colin stammered out: "Good morning, Marietta," but the greeting came not from his heart.

"Why dost thou wear my ribbon so publicly, Colin?" said Marietta, and placed the cup upon the rock. "I did not give it thee."

"Thou didst not give it to me, dear Marietta?" asked he, and inward rage made him deadly pale.

Marietta was ashamed of the falsehood, drooped her eyelids, and said after a while: "Well, I did give it thee, yet thou shouldst not have worn it. Give it back."

Slowly he untied it; his anger was so great that he could not prevent the tears from filling his eyes, nor the sighs from escaping his breast.—"Dear Marietta, leave thy ribbon with me," said he softly.

"No," answered she.

Then his suppressed passion changed into desperation. Sighing, he looked toward heaven, then sadly on Marietta, who silent and abashed, stood by the spring with downcast eyes.

He wound the violet-colored ribbon around the stalks of the flowers, and said: "There, take them all," and threw the flowers so spitefully against the magnificent cup upon the rock that it was thrown down and dashed to pieces. Maliciously he fled away.

Mother Manon, lurking behind the window, had seen and heard all. When the cup broke, hearing and sight left her. She was scarcely able to speak for very horror. And as she pushed with all her strength against the narrow window, to shout after the guilty one, it gave way, and with one crash fell to earth and was shattered in pieces.

So much ill-luck would have discomposed any other woman. But Manon soon recovered herself. "How lucky that I was a witness to this roguery!" exclaimed she; "he must to the justice

—he shall replace both cup and window-sash with his gold. It will give a rich dowry to Marietta." But when Marietta brought in the fragments of the shattered cup, when Manon saw the Paradise lost, the good man Adam without a head, and of Eve not a solitary limb remaining, the serpent unhurt, triumphing, the tiger safe, but the little lamb gone even to the very tail, as if the tiger had swallowed it, then Mother Manon screamed forth curses against Colin, and said: "One can easily see that this *fall* came from the hand of the devil."

. . . .

She took the cup in one hand, Marietta in the other, and went, about nine o'clock, to where Monsieur Hautmartin was wont to sit in judgment. She there made a great outcry, and showed the broken cup and the Paradise lost. Marietta wept bitterly.

The justice, when he saw the broken cup and his beautiful bride in tears, flew into so violent a rage toward Colin that his nose was as violet-colored as Marietta's well-known hat-band. He immediately despatched his bailiffs to bring the criminal before him.

Colin came, overwhelmed with grief. Mother Manon now repeated her complaint with great eloquence before justice, bailiffs, and scribes.—But Colin listened not. He stepped to Marietta and whispered to her: "Forgive me, dear Marietta, as I forgive thee. I broke thy cup unintentionally; but thou, thou hast broken my heart!"

"What whispering is that?" cried Justice Hautmartin, with magisterial authority. "Harken to this accusation, and defend yourself."

"I have naught to defend. I broke the cup against my will," said Colin.

"That I verily believe," said Marietta, sobbing. "I am as guilty as he; for I offended him—then he threw the ribbon and flowers to me. He could not help it."

"Well!" cried Mother Manon. "Do you intend to defend him? Mr. Justice, pronounce his sentence. He has broken the cup, and he does not deny it."

"Since you cannot deny it, Mr. Colin," said the Justice, "you must pay three hundred livres for the cup, for it is worth that; and then for—"

"No," interrupted Colin, "it is not worth that. I bought it at Vence for Marietta for a hundred livres."

"You bought it, sir brazen face?" shrieked the Justice, and his whole face became like Marietta's hat-band. He could not and would not say more, for he dreaded a disagreeable investigation of the matter.

But Colin was vexed at the imputation, and said: "I sent this cup on the evening of the fair, by your own servant, to Marietta. There stands Jacques in the door. Speak, Jacques, did I not give thee the box to carry to Mother Manon?"

Monsieur Hautmartin wished to interrupt this

conversation by speaking loudly. But the simple Jacques said: "Only recollect, Justice, you took away Colin's box from me, and carried what was in it to Mother Manon. The box lies there under the papers."

Then the bailiffs were ordered to remove the simpleton; and Colin was also directed to retire, until he should be sent for again.

"Very well, Mr. Justice," interposed Colin, "but this business shall be your last in Napoule. I know this, that you would ingratiate yourself with Mother Manon and Marietta by means of my property. When you want me, you will have to ride to Grasse to the Governor's." With that, Colin departed.

Monsieur Hautmartin was quite puzzled with this affair, and in his confusion knew not what he was about. Manon shook her head. The affair was dark and mysterious to her. "Who will now pay me for the broken cup?" she asked.

"To me," said Marietta, with glowing, brightened countenance, "to *me* it is already paid for."

. . . .

Colin rode that same day to the Governor at Grasse, and came back early the next morning. But Justice Hautmartin only laughed at him, and removed all of Mother Manon's suspicions by swearing he would let his nose be cut off if Colin did not pay three hundred livres for the broken cup. He also went with Mother Manon to talk with Father Jerome about the marriage,

and impressed upon him the necessity of earnestly setting before Marietta her duty as an obedient daughter in not opposing the will of her mother. This the pious old man promised, although he understood not the half of what they shouted in his ear.

When Monday morning came Mother Manon said to her daughter: "Dress yourself handsomely, and carry this myrtle wreath to Father Jerome; he wants it for a bride." Marietta dressed herself in her Sunday clothes, took the myrtle wreath unsuspiciously, and carried it to Father Jerome.

On the way Colin met her, and greeted her joyfully, though timidly; and when she told him where she was taking the wreath, Colin said: "I am going the same way, for I am carrying the money for the church's tenths to the priest." And as they went on he took her hand silently, and both trembled as if they designed some crime against each other.

"Hast thou forgiven me?" whispered Colin, anxiously. "Ah! Marietta, what have I done to thee, that thou art so cruel toward me?"

She could only say: "Be quiet, Colin, you shall have the ribbon again; and I will preserve the cup since it came from you! Did it really come from you?"

"Ah! Marietta, canst thou doubt it? All I have I would gladly give thee. Wilt thou, hereafter, be as kind to me as thou art to others?"

She replied not. But as she entered the parsonage she looked aside at him, and when she saw his fine eyes filled with tears, she whispered softly: "Dear Colin!" Then he bent down and kissed her hand. With this the door of a chamber opened and Father Jerome, with venerable aspect, stood before them. The young couple held fast to each other. I know not whether this was the effect of the hand-kissing, or the awe they felt for the sage.

Marietta handed him the myrtle wreath. He laid it upon her head and said: "Little children, love one another;" and then urged the good maiden, in the most touching and pathetic manner, to love Colin. For the old gentleman, from his hardness of hearing, had either mistaken the name of the bridegroom, or forgotten it, and thought Colin must be the bridegroom.

Then Marietta's heart softened under the exhortation, and with tears and sobs she exclaimed: "Ah! I have loved him for a long time, but he hates me."

"I hate thee, Marietta?" cried Colin. "My soul has lived only in thee since thou camest to Napoule. Oh! Marietta, how could I hope and believe that thou didst love me? Does not all Napoule worship thee?"

"Why, then, dost thou avoid me, Colin, and prefer all my companions before me?"

"Oh! Marietta, I feared and trembled with love and anxiety when I beheld thee; I had not

the courage to approach thee; and when I was away from thee I was most miserable."

As they talked thus with each other the good father thought they were quarreling; and he threw his arms around them, brought them together, and said imploringly: "Little children, love one another."

Then Marietta sank on Colin's breast, and Colin threw his arms around her, and both faces beamed with rapture. They forgot the priest, the whole world. Each was sunk into the other. Both had so completely lost their recollection that, unwittingly, they followed the delightful Father Jerome into the church and before the altar.

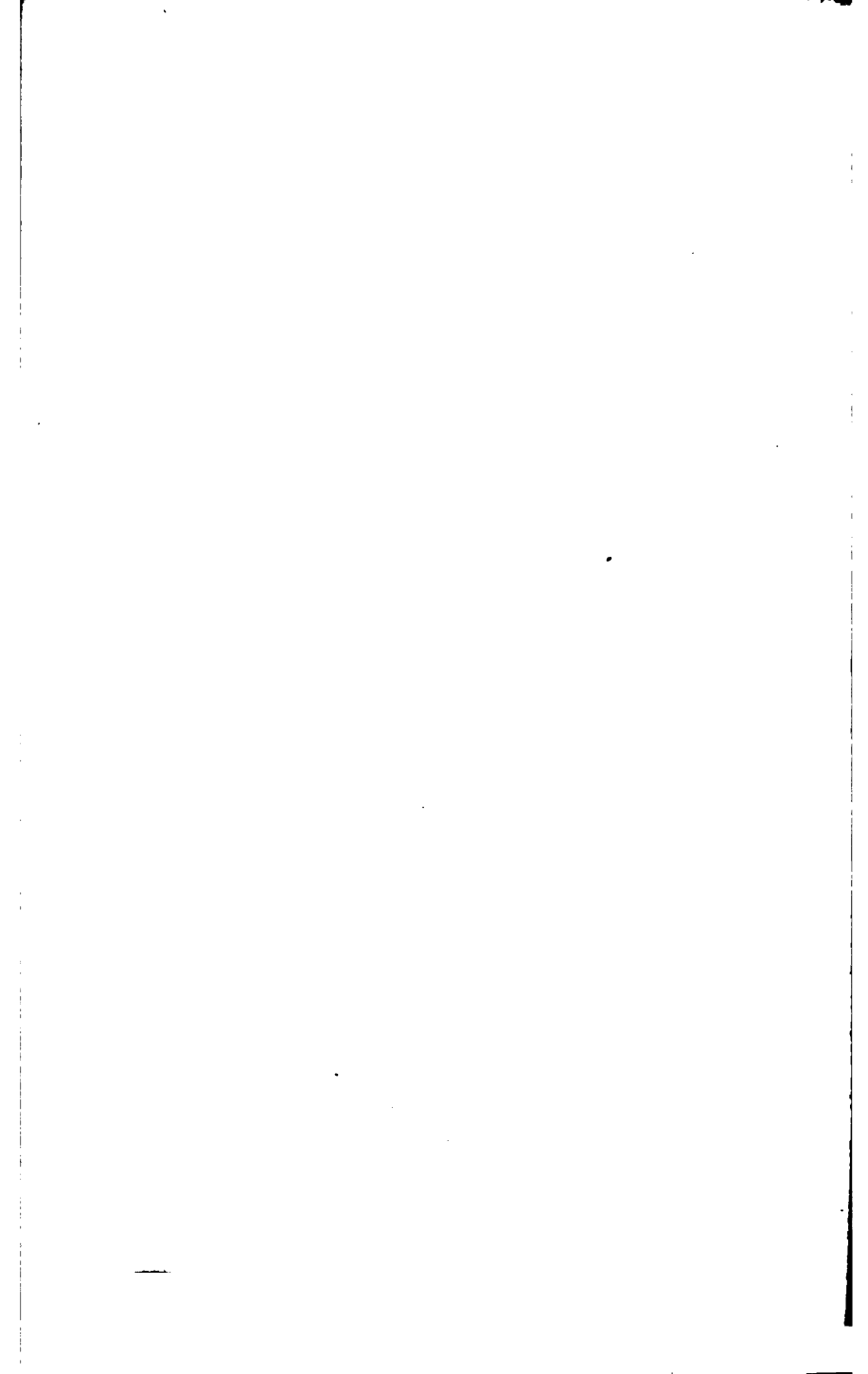
"Marietta!" sighed he.

"Colin!" sighed she.

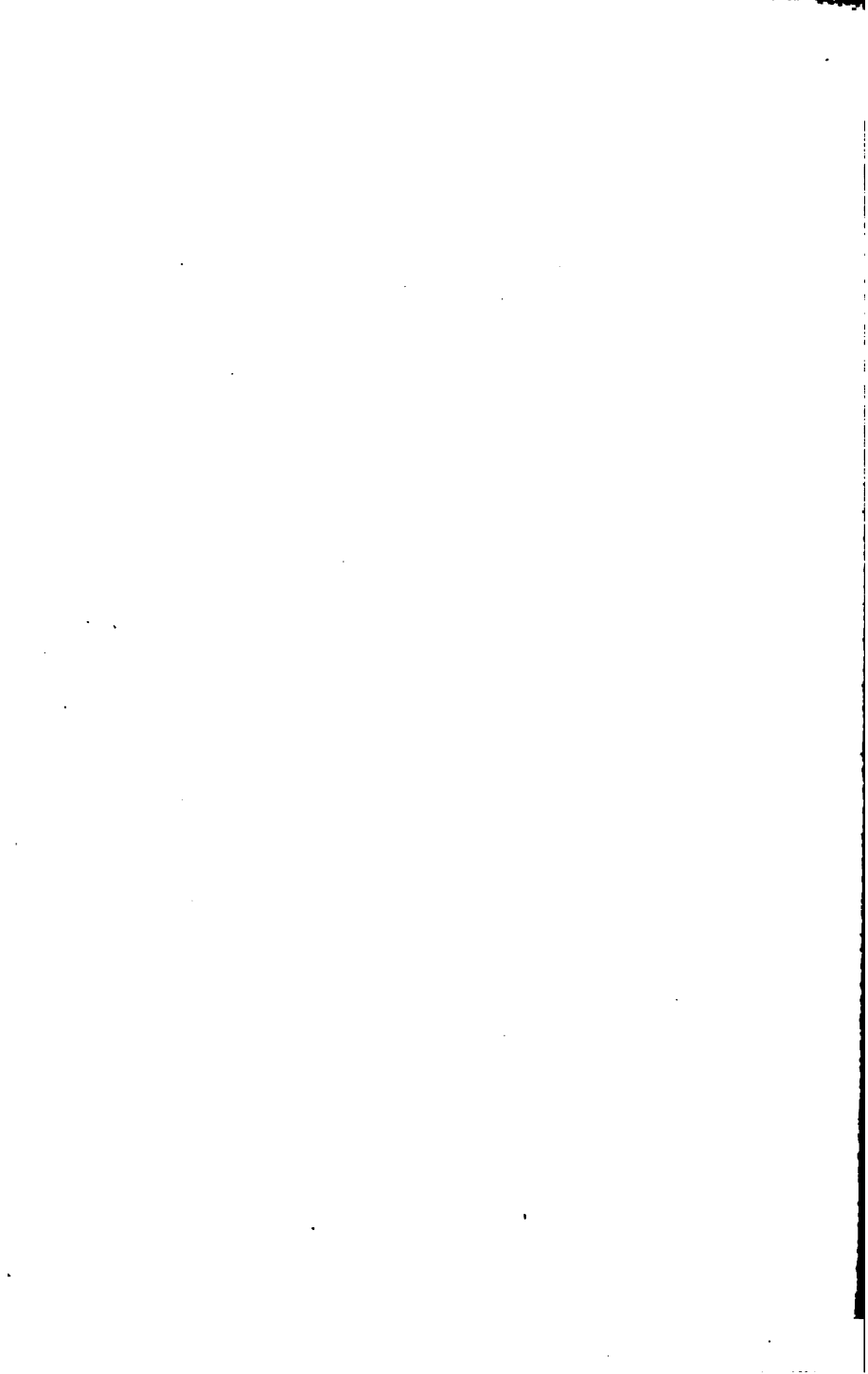
In the church there were many devout worshipers; but they witnessed Colin's and Marietta's marriage with amazement. Many ran out before the close of the ceremony, to spread the news throughout Napoule: Colin and Marietta are married."

When the solemnization was over, Father Jerome rejoiced that he had succeeded so well, and that such little opposition had been made by the parties. He led them into the parsonage.

. . . .

Then Mother Manon arrived, breathless; she had waited at home a long time for the bridegroom. He had not arrived. At the last stroke

WHICH WAS THE MADMAN?

THE STORY OF A STRANGE CASE

BY EDMOND FRANÇOIS VALENTIN ABOUT

WHICH WAS THE MADMAN?

THE STORY OF A STRANGE CASE

BY EDMOND FRANÇOIS VALENTIN ABOUT

I

ONE might pass Dr. Auvray's house twenty times without suspecting the miracles that are wrought there. It is a modest establishment near the end of Montaigne Avenue, between Prince Soltikoff's Gothic palace and the gymnasium. The unpretentious iron gates open into a small garden, filled with lilacs and rosebushes. The porter's lodge is on the left side of the gateway; the wing containing the doctor's office and the apartments of his wife and daughter are on the right; while the main building stands with its back to the street and its south windows overlook a small grove of horsechestnuts and lindens.

It is there that the doctor treats, and generally cures, cases of mental aberration. I would not introduce you into his house, however, if you incurred any risk of meeting frenzied lunatics or hopeless imbeciles. You will be spared all such harrowing sights. Dr. Auvray is a specialist, and treats cases of monomania only. He is an

extremely kind-hearted man, endowed with plenty of shrewdness and good sense; a true philosopher, an untiring student, and an enthusiastic follower of the famous Esquirol.

Having come into possession of a small fortune soon after the completion of his medical course, he married, and founded the establishment which we have described. Had there been a spark of charlatanism in his composition, he could easily have amassed a fortune, but he had been content to merely earn a living. He shunned notoriety, and when he effected a wonderful cure, he never proclaimed it upon the housetops. His very enviable reputation had been acquired without any effort on his part, and almost against his will. Would you have a proof of this? Well, his treatise on monomania, published by Baillière in 1852, has passed through six editions, though the author has never sent a single copy to the newspapers. Modesty is a good thing, certainly, but one may carry it too far. Mademoiselle Auvray will have a dowry of only twenty thousand francs, and she will be twenty-two in April.

About a month ago a hired coupé stopped in front of Dr. Auvray's door, from which two men alighted and entered the office. The servant asked them to be seated, and await his master's return.

One of the visitors was about fifty years of age, a tall, stout, dark-complexioned but ruddy-

faced man, rather ungainly in figure and appearance. He had thick, stubby hands and enormous thumbs. Picture a laboring man, dressed in his employer's clothes, and you have M. Morlot.

His nephew, Francis Thomas, is a young man, about twenty-three years old; but it is very difficult to describe him, as there is nothing distinctive either in his manner or appearance. He is neither tall nor short, handsome nor ugly, stout nor thin—in short, he is commonplace and mediocre in every respect, with chestnut hair, and of an extremely retiring disposition, manner and attire. When he entered Dr. Auvray's office, he seemed to be greatly excited. He walked wildly to and fro, as if unable to remain in one place; looked at twenty different things in the same instant, and would certainly have handled them all if his hands had not been tied.

"Compose yourself, my dear Francis," said his uncle, soothingly. "What I am doing is for your own good. You will be perfectly comfortable and happy here, and the doctor is sure to cure you."

"I am not sick. There is nothing whatever the matter with me. Why have you tied my hands?"

"Because you would have thrown me out of the window, if I had not. You are not in your right mind, my poor boy, but Dr. Auvray will soon make you well again."

"I am as sane as you are, uncle; and I can't

imagine what you mean. My mind is perfectly clear and my memory excellent. Shall I recite some poetry to you, or construe some Latin? I see there is a Tacitus here in the bookcase. Or, if you prefer, I will solve a problem in algebra or geometry. You don't desire it? Very well, then listen while I tell you what you have been doing this morning.

"You came to my room at eight o'clock, not to wake me, for I was not asleep, but to get me out of bed. I dressed myself without any assistance from Germain. You asked me to accompany you to Dr. Auvray's; I refused; you insisted; then Germain aided you in tying my hands. I shall dismiss him this evening. I owe him thirteen days' wages; that is to say, thirteen francs, as I promised to pay him thirty francs a month. You, too, owe him something, as you are the cause of his losing his New Year's gift. Isn't this a tolerably clear statement of the facts? Do you still intend to try to make me out a lunatic? Ah, my dear uncle, let your better nature assert itself. Remember that my mother was your sister. What would my poor mother say if she saw me here? I bear you no ill-will, and everything can be amicably arranged. You have a daughter."

"Ah, there it is again. You must certainly see that you are not in your right mind. I have a daughter— I? Why, I am a bachelor, as you know perfectly well."

"You have a daughter—" repeated Francis, mechanically.

"My poor nephew, listen to me a moment. Have you a cousin?"

"A cousin? No, I have no cousin. Oh, you won't catch me there. I have no cousin, either male or female."

"But I am your uncle, am I not?"

"Yes; you are my uncle, of course, though you seem to have forgotten the fact this morning."

"Then if I had a daughter, she would be your cousin; but as you have no cousin, I can have no daughter."

"You are right, of course. I had the pleasure of meeting her at Ems last summer with her mother; I love her; I have reason to believe that she is not indifferent to me, and I have the honor to ask you for her hand in marriage."

"Whose hand, may I ask?"

"Your daughter's hand."

"Just hear him," Morlot said to himself. "Dr. Auvray must certainly be very clever if he succeeds in curing him. I am willing to pay him six thousand francs a year for board and treatment. Six thousand francs from thirty thousand leaves twenty-four thousand. How rich I shall be! Poor Francis!"

He seated himself again, and picked up a book that chanced to be lying on a table near him.

"Calm yourself," he said soothingly, "and I

will read you something. Try to listen. It may quiet you."

Opening the volume, he read as follows:

" 'Monomania is opinionativeness on one subject; a persistent clinging to one idea; the supreme ascendency of a single passion. It has its origin in the heart. To cure the malady, the cause must be ascertained and removed. It arises generally from love, fear, vanity, overweening ambition or remorse, and betrays itself by the same symptoms as any other passion; sometimes by boisterousness, gaiety, and garrulousness; sometimes by extreme timidity, melancholy, and silence.' "

As M. Morlot read on, Francis became more quiet, and at last appeared to fall into a peaceful slumber.

"Bravo!" thought the uncle, "here is a triumph of medical skill already. It has put to sleep a man who was neither hungry nor sleepy!"

Francis was not asleep, but he was feigning sleep to perfection. His head drooped lower and lower, and he regulated his heavy breathing with mathematical exactness. Uncle Morlot was completely deceived. He went on reading for some time in more and more subdued tones; then he yawned; then he stopped reading; then he let the book drop from his hands and closed his eyes, and in another minute he was sound asleep, to the intense delight of his nephew, who was watching him maliciously out of the corner of his eye.

Francis began operations by scraping his chair on the uncarpeted floor, but M. Morlot moved no more than a post. Francis then tramped noisily up and down the room, but his uncle snored the louder. Then the nephew approached the doctor's desk, picked up an eraser that was lying there, and with it finally succeeded in cutting the rope that bound his hands. On regaining his liberty he uttered a smothered exclamation of joy; then he cautiously approached his uncle. In two minutes, M. Morlot himself was securely bound, but it had been done so gently and so adroitly that his slumbers had not been disturbed in the least.

Francis stood admiring his work for a moment; then he stooped and picked up the book that had fallen to the floor. It was Dr. Auvray's treatise on monomania. He carried it off into a corner of the room and began to read it with much apparent interest, while awaiting the doctor's coming.

II

It is necessary to revert briefly to the antecedents of this uncle and nephew. Francis Thomas was the only son of a former toy-merchant, on the Rue de Saumon. The toy trade is an excellent business, about one hundred per cent profit being realized on most of the articles; consequently, since his father's death, Francis had been enjoying that ease generally known as hon-

est ease; possibly because it enables one to live without stooping to sordid acts; possibly, too, because it enables one to keep one's friends honest, also. In short, he had an income of thirty thousand francs a year.

His tastes were extremely simple, as I have said before. He detested show, and always selected gloves, waistcoats, and trousers of those sober hues shading from dark brown to black. He never carried an eyeglass for the very good reason, he said, that he had excellent eyesight; he wore no scarf-pin, because he needed no pin to hold his cravat securely; but the fact is, he was afraid of exciting comment. He would have been wretched had his sponsors bestowed upon him any save the most commonplace names; but, fortunately, his cognomens were as modest and unpretending as if he had chosen them himself.

His excessive modesty prevented him from adopting a profession. When he left college, he considered long and carefully the seven or eight different paths open before him. A legal career seemed to be attended with too much publicity; the medical profession was too exciting; business too complicated. The responsibilities of an instructor of youth were to onerous; the duties of a government official too confining and servile. As for the army, that was out of the question, not because he feared the enemy, but because he shuddered at the thought of wearing a uniform; so he finally decided to live on his income, not

because it was the easiest thing to do, but because it was the most unobtrusive.

But it was in the presence of the fair sex that his weakness became most apparent. He was always in love with somebody. Whenever he attended a play or a concert he immediately began to gaze around him in search of a pretty face. If he found one to his taste, the play was admirable, the music perfection; if he failed, the whole performance was detestable, the actors murdered their lines, and all the singers sang out of tune. He worshiped these divinities in secret, however, for he never dared to speak to one of them.

When he fancied himself a victim to the tender passion, he spent the greater part of his time in composing the most impassioned declarations of love, which never passed his lips, however. In imagination he addressed the tenderest words of affection to his adored one, and revealed the innermost depths of his soul to her; he held long conversations with her, delightful interviews, in which he furnished both the questions and answers. His burning protestations of undying love would have melted a heart of ice, but none of his divinities were ever aware of his aspirations and longings.

It chanced, however, in the month of August of that same year, about four months before he so adroitly bound his uncle's hands, that Francis had met at Ems a young lady almost as shy and retiring as himself, a young lady whose excessive

timidity seemed to imbue him with some of the courage of an ordinary mortal. She was a frail, delicate *Parisienne*—pale as a flower that had blossomed in the shade, and with a skin as transparent as an infant's. She was at Ems in company with her mother, who had been advised to try the waters for an obstinate throat trouble, chronic laryngitis, if I remember right. The mother and daughter had evidently led a very secluded life, for they watched the noisy crowd with undisguised curiosity and amazement. Francis was introduced to them quite unexpectedly by one of his friends who was returning from Italy by way of Germany. After that, Francis was with them almost constantly for a month; in fact, he was their sole companion.

For sensitive, retiring souls, a crowd is the most complete of solitudes; the more people there are around them, the more persistently they retreat to a corner to commune with themselves. Of course, the mother and daughter soon became well acquainted with Francis, and they grew very fond of him. Like the navigator who first set foot on American soil, they discovered some new treasure every day. They never inquired whether he was rich or poor; it was enough for them to know that he was good. Francis, for his part, was inexpressibly delighted with his own transformation. Have you ever heard how spring comes in the gardens of Russia? One day everything is shrouded in snow; the next day a

ray of sunshine appears and puts grim winter to flight. By noon the trees are in bloom; by night they are covered with leaves; a day or two more and the fruit appears.

The heart of Francis underwent a similar metamorphosis. His reserve and apparent coldness disappeared as if by magic, and in a few short weeks the timid youth was transformed into a resolute, energetic man—at least to all appearances. I do not know which of the three persons first mentioned marriage, but that is a matter of no consequence. Marriage is always understood when two honest hearts avow their love.

Now Francis was of age, and undisputed master of himself and his possessions, but the girl he loved had a father whose consent must be obtained, and it was just here that this young man's natural timidity of disposition reasserted itself. True, Claire had said to him: "You can write to my father without any misgivings. He knows all about our attachment. You will receive his consent by return mail."

Francis wrote and rewrote his letter a hundred times, but he could not summon up the courage to send it.

Surely the ordeal was an easy one, and it would seem as though the most timorous mind could have passed through it triumphantly. Francis knew the name, position, fortune, and even the disposition of his prospective father-in-

law. He had been initiated into all the family secrets, he was virtually a member of the household. The only thing he had to do was to state in the briefest manner who he was and what he possessed. There was no doubt whatever as to the response; but he delayed so long that at the end of a month Claire and her mother very naturally began to doubt his sincerity. I think they would have waited patiently another fortnight, however, but the father would not permit it. If Claire loved the young man, and her lover was not disposed to make known his intentions, the girl must leave him at once. Perhaps Mr. Francis Thomas would then come and ask her hand in marriage. He knew where to find her.

Thus it chanced that, one morning when Francis went to invite the ladies to walk as usual, the proprietor of the hotel informed him that they had returned to Paris, and that their apartments were already occupied by an English family. This crushing blow, falling so unexpectedly, destroyed the poor fellow's reason, and, rushing out of the house like a madman, he began a frantic search for Claire in all the places where he had been in the habit of meeting her. At last he returned to his own hotel with a violent sick headache, which he proceeded to doctor in the most energetic manner. First he had himself bled, then he took baths in boiling hot water, and applied the most ferocious mustard plasters; in short, he avenged his mental tortures upon his

innocent body. When he believed himself cured, he started for France, firmly resolved to have an interview with Claire's father before even changing his clothes. He traveled with all possible speed, jumped off the train before it stopped, forgetting his baggage entirely, sprang into a cab, and shouted to the coachman:

"Drive to her home as quick as you can!"

"Where, sir?"

"To the house of Monsieur—on the—the Rue —I can't remember." He had forgotten the name and address of the girl he loved.

"I will go home," he said to himself, "and it will come back to me."

So he handed his card to the coachman, who took him to his own home.

His concierge was an aged man, with no children, and named Emmanuel. On seeing him, Francis bowed profoundly, and said:

"Sir, you have a daughter Mlle. Claire Emmanuel. I intended to write and ask you for her hand in marriage, but decided it would be more seemly to make the request in person."

They saw that he was mad, and his uncle Morlot, in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, was immediately summoned.

Now Uncle Morlot was the most scrupulously honest man on the Rue Charonne, which, by the way, is one of the longest streets in Paris. He manufactured antique furniture with conscientious care, but only mediocre skill. He was not

a man to pass off ebonized pine for real ebony, or a cabinet of his own make for a medieval production; and yet, he understood the art of making new wood look old and full of apparent worm-holes as well as anybody living; but it was a principle of his never to cheat or deceive any one. With almost absurd moderation for a follower of this trade, he limited his profits to five per cent over and above the expenses of the business, so he had gained more esteem than money. When he made out a bill, he invariably added up the items three times, so afraid was he of making a mistake in his own favor.

After thirty years of close attention to business he was very little better off than when he finished his apprenticeship. He had merely earned his living, just like the humblest of his workmen, and he often asked himself rather enviously how his brother-in-law had managed to acquire a competence. If this brother-in-law, with the natural arrogance of a *parvenu,* rather looked down on the poor cabinet-maker, the latter, with all the pride of a man who has not tried to succeed financially, esteemed himself all the more highly. He gloried in his poverty, as it were; and said to himself with plebeian pride: "I, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing that I owe nothing to any one."

Man is a strange animal: I am not the first person who has made that remark. This most estimable M. Morlot, whose overscrupulous prob-

ity made him almost a laughing-stock, experienced a singular feeling of elation in his secret heart when he was apprised of his nephew's condition. An insinuating voice whispered softly: "If Francis is insane, you will become his guardian."

"You will be none the richer," responded Conscience, promptly.

"And why not?" persisted the Tempter. "The expenses of an insane person never amount to thirty thousand francs a year. Besides, you will be put to a great deal of trouble and have to neglect your business, very probably, so it is only right that you should receive some compensation. You will not be wronging any one by taking part of the money."

"But one ought to expect no compensation for such services to a member of one's family," retorted the voice of Conscience.

"Then why have the members of our family never done anything for me? I have been in straitened circumstances again and again, and have found it almost impossible to meet my obligations, but neither my nephew Francis nor his deceased father ever rendered me the slightest assistance."

"Nonsense," replied his better nature; "this attack of insanity is nothing serious. Francis will be himself again in a few days."

"It is just as probable that the malady will wear him out and that you will come into posses-

sion of the entire property," persisted the wily Tempter.

The worthy cabinet-maker tried to close his ears to the insidious voice, but his ears were so large that the subtle, persistent voice glided in, despite all his efforts. The establishment on the Rue Charonne was intrusted to the care of the foreman, and the uncle took up his abode in his nephew's comfortable apartments. He slept in an excellent bed, and enjoyed it very much; he sat down to a well-spread table, and the indigestion, which had tormented him for years, vanished as if by enchantment. He was waited upon and shaved by Germain, his nephew's valet, and he speedily came to regard such attentions as a necessity. Gradually, too, he became accustomed to seeing his nephew in this deplorable condition, and to quite reconcile himself to the idea that he would never be cured, but all the while he kept repeating to himself, as if to ease his conscience, "I am wronging nobody."

At the expiration of three months he had become very tired of having an insane person shut up in the house with him—for he had long since begun to consider himself at home—and his nephew's incessant maundering, and continual requests for Mlle. Claire's hand in marriage, became an intolerable bore. He therefore resolved to get rid of him by placing him in Dr. Auvray's insane asylum.

"After all, my nephew will be much better

cared for there," he said to himself, "and I shall be much easier in mind. Every one admits that the best way to divert a lunatic's mind is to give him a change of scene, so I am only doing my duty."

It was with this very thought in his mind that he fell asleep just before Francis bound his hands. What an awakening was his!

The doctor entered with a smiling excuse for his long delay. Francis rose, laid his book on the table, and proceeded with volubility to explain the business that had brought him there.

"It is my uncle on my mother's side that I desire to intrust in your care," he began. "He is, as you see, a man between forty-five and fifty years of age, accustomed to manual labor and the economy and privations of a humble and busy life; moreover, he was born of healthy, hard-working parents, in a family where no case of mental aberration was ever before known. You will not, therefore, be obliged to contend with a hereditary malady. His is probably one of the most peculiar cases of monomania that has ever come under your observation. His mood changes almost instantáneously from one of extreme gaiety to profound melancholy. In fact, it is a strange compound of monomania and melancholy."

"He has not lost his reason entirely?"

"Oh, no; he is never violent; in fact, he is insane upon one subject only."

"What is the nature of his malady?"

"Alas! the besetting sin of the age, sir; cupidity. He has become deeply imbued with the spirit of our times. After working hard from childhood, he finds himself still comparatively poor, while my father, who began life under like circumstances, was able to leave me a snug little fortune. My uncle began by being envious of me; then the thought occurred to him that, being my only relative, he would become my heir in case of my death, and my guardian in case I became insane; and as it is very easy for a weak-minded person to believe whatever he desires to believe, the unfortunate man soon persuaded himself that I had lost my reason. He has told everybody that this is the case; and he will soon tell you so. In the carriage, though his hands were tied, he really believed that it was he who was bringing me here."

"When did this malady first show itself?"

"About three months ago. He came to my concierge and said to him, in the wildest manner: 'Monsieur Emmanuel, you have a daughter. Let me in, and then come and assist me in binding my nephew.' "

"Is he aware of his condition? Does he know that his mind is affected?"

"No, sir, and I think that is a favorable sign. I should add, however, that his physical health is somewhat impaired, and he is much troubled with indigestion and insomnia."

"So much the better; an insane person who sleeps and eats regularly is generally incurable. Suppose you allow me to wake him."

Dr. Auvray placed his hand gently on the shoulder of the sleeper, who instantly sprang to his feet. The first movement he made was to rub his eyes. When he discovered that his hands were tied, he instantly suspected what had taken place while he was asleep, and burst into a hearty laugh.

"A good joke, a very good joke!" he exclaimed.

Francis drew the doctor a little aside.

"Sir, in five minutes he will be in a towering rage," he whispered.

"Let me manage him. I know how to take him."

The good doctor smiled on the supposed patient as one smiles on a child one wishes to amuse. "Well, you wake in very good spirits, my friend; did you have a pleasant dream?" he asked affably.

"No, I had no dream at all; I'm merely laughing to find myself tied up like a bundle of fagots. One would suppose that I was the madman, instead of my nephew."

"There I told you so," whispered Francis.

"Have the goodness to untie my hands, doctor. I can explain better when I am free."

"I will unbind you, my friend, but you must promise to give no trouble."

"Can it be, doctor, that you really take me for an insane person?"

"No, my friend, but you are ill, and we will take care of you, and, I hope, cure you. See, your hands are free; don't abuse your liberty."

"What the devil do you imagine I'll do? I came here merely to bring my nephew."

"Very well, we will talk about that matter by and by. I found you sound asleep. Do you often fall asleep in the daytime?"

"Never! It was that stupid book that—"

"Oh, oh! This is a serious case," muttered the author of the book referred to. "So you really believe that your nephew is insane?"

"Dangerously so, doctor. The fact that I was obliged to bind his hands with this very rope is proof of that."

"But it was your hands that were bound. Don't you recollect that I just untied them?"

"But let me explain—"

"Gently, gently, my friend, you are becoming excited. Your face is very red; I don't want you to fatigue yourself. Just be content to answer my questions. You say that your nephew is ill?"

"Mad, mad, mad, I tell you!"

"And it pleases you to see him mad?"

"What?"

"Answer me frankly. You don't wish him to be cured, do you?"

"Why do you ask me that?"

"Because his fortune is under your control. Don't you wish to be rich? Are you not disappointed and discouraged because you have toiled so long without making a fortune? Don't you very naturally think that your turn has come now?"

M. Morlot made no reply. His eyes were riveted on the floor. He asked himself if he was not dreaming, and tried his best to decide how much of this whole affair was real, and how much imaginary, so completely bewildered was he by the questions of this stranger, who read his heart as if he had been an open book.

"Do you ever hear voices?" inquired Dr. Auvray.

Poor M. Morlot felt his hair stand on end, and remembering that relentless voice that was ever whispering in his ear, he replied mechanically, "Sometimes."

"Ah, he is the victim of a hallucination," murmured the doctor.

"No, there is nothing whatever the matter with me, I tell you. Let me get out of here. I shall be as crazy as my nephew if I remain much longer. Ask my friends. They will all tell you that I am perfectly sane. Feel my pulse. You can see that I have no fever."

"Poor uncle!" murmured Francis. "He doesn't know that insanity is delirium unattended with fever."

"Yes," added the doctor, "if we could only

give our patients a fever, we could cure every one of them."

M. Morlot sank back despairingly in his arm-chair. His nephew began to pace the floor.

"I am deeply grieved at my uncle's deplorable condition," he remarked feelingly, "but it is a great consolation to me to be able to intrust him to the care of a man like yourself. I have read your admirable treatise on monomania. It is the most valuable work of the kind that has appeared since the publication of the great Esquirol's Treatise upon Mental Diseases. I know, moreover, that you are truly a father to your patients, so I will not insult you by commending M. Morlot to your special care. As for the compensation you are to receive, I leave that entirely to you."

As he spoke, he drew from his pocket-book a thousand-franc note and laid it on the mantel. "I shall do myself the honor to call again some time during the ensuing week. At what hour are your patients allowed to see visitors?"

"From twelve to two, only; but I am always at home. Good day, sir."

"Stop him! stop him!" shouted Uncle Morlot. "Don't let him go. He is the one that is mad; I will tell you all about it."

"Calm yourself, my dear uncle," said Francis, starting toward the door. "I leave you in Dr. Auvray's care; he will soon cure you, I trust."

M. Morlot sprang up to intercept his nephew, but the doctor detained him.

"What a strange fatality!" cried the poor uncle. "He has not uttered a single senseless remark. If he would only rave as usual, you would soon see that I am not the one who is mad, but—"

Francis already had his hand on the door-knob, but turning suddenly, he retraced his steps as if he had forgotten something and, walking straight up to the doctor, said:

"My uncle's malady was not the only thing that brought me here."

"Ah," murmured M. Morlot, seeing a ray of hope, at last.

"You have a daughter," continued the young man.

"At last!" shouted the poor uncle. "You are a witness to the fact that he said: 'You have a daughter.' "

"Yes." replied the doctor, addressing Francis. "Will you kindly explain—"

"You have a daughter, Mlle. Claire Auvray."

"There, there! didn't I tell you so?" cried the uncle.

"Yes," again replied the doctor.

"She was at Ems three months ago with her mother."

"Bravo! Bravo!" yelled M. Morlot.

"Yes," responded the physician for the third time.

M. Morlot rushed up to the doctor, and cried: "You are not the doctor, but a patient in the house."

"My friend, if you are not more quiet we shall have to give you a douche."

M. Morlot recoiled in terror. His nephew continued calmly:

"I love your daughter, sir; I have some hope that I am loved in return, and if her feelings have not changed since the month of September, I have the honor to ask her hand in marriage."

"Is it to Monsieur Francis Thomas that I have the honor of speaking?" inquired the doctor.

"The same, sir. I should have begun by telling you my name."

"Then you must permit me to say, sir, that you have been guilty of no unseemly haste—"

But just then the good doctor's attention was diverted by M. Morlot, who was rubbing his hands in a frenzied manner.

"What is the matter with you, my friend?" the doctor asked in his kind, fatherly way.

"Nothing, nothing! I am only washing my hands. There is something on them that troubles me."

"Show me what it is. I don't see anything."

"Can't you see it? There, there, between my fingers. I see it plainly enough."

"What do you see?"

"My nephew's money. Take it away, doctor.

I'm an honest man; I don't want anything that belongs to anybody else."

While the physician was listening attentively to M. Morlot's first ravings, an extraordinary change took place in Francis. He became as pale as death, and seemed to be suffering terribly from cold, for his teeth chattered so violently that Dr. Auvray turned and asked what was the matter with him.

"Nothing," he replied. "She is coming, I hear her! It is joy, but it overpowers me. It seems to be falling on me and burying me beneath its weight like a snowdrift. Winter will be a dreary time for lovers. Oh, doctor, see what is the matter with my head!"

But his uncle rushed up to him, crying:

"Enough, enough! Don't rave so! I don't want people to think you mad. They will say I stole your reason from you. I'm an honest man. Doctor, look at my hands, examine my pockets, send to my house on the Rue Charonne. Search the cupboard. Open all the drawers. You will find I have nothing that belongs to any other person."

Between his two patients the doctor was at his wits' end, when a door opened, and Claire came in to tell her father that breakfast was on the table.

Francis leaped up out of his chair, as if moved by a spring, but though his will prompted him to rush toward Mlle. Auvray, his flesh proved weak,

and he fell back in his chair like lead. He could scarcely murmur the words:

"Claire, it is I! I love you. Will you—"

He passed his hand over his forehead. His pale face became a vivid scarlet. His temples throbbed almost to bursting; it seemed to him that an iron band was contracting more and more around his head, just above his brows. Claire, frightened nearly to death, seized both his hands; his skin was so dry, and his pulse so rapid that the poor girl was terrified. It was not thus that she had hoped to see him again. In a few minutes, a yellowish tinge appeared about his nostrils; nausea ensued, and Dr. Auvray recognized all the symptoms of a bilious fever.

"How unfortunate!" he said to himself. "If this fever had only attacked his uncle, it would have cured him!"

He rang. A servant appeared, and shortly afterward Mme. Auvray, who scarcely knew Francis, so greatly had he changed. It was necessary that the sick man should be got to bed without delay, and Claire relinquished her own pretty room to him. While they were installing him there, his uncle wandered excitedly about the parlor, tormenting the doctor with questions, embracing the sick man, seizing Mme. Auvray's hand and exclaiming wildly: "Save him, save him! He shall not die! I will not have him die! I forbid it. I have a right to. I am his uncle and guardian. If you do not care for him, people

will say I killed him. You are witnesses to the fact that I ask for none of his property! I shall give all his possessions to the poor! Some water —please give me some water to wash my hands!" He was taken to the building occupied by the patients, where he became so violent that it was necessary to put him in a strait-jacket.

Mme. Auvray and her daughter nursed Francis with the tenderest care. Confined in the sick-room day and night, the mother and daughter spent most of their leisure time discussing the situation. They could not explain the lover's long silence or his sudden reappearance. If he loved Claire, why had he left her in suspense for three dreary months? Why did he feel obliged to give his uncle's malady an excuse for presenting himself at Dr. Auvray's house? But if he had recovered from his infatuation, why did he not take his uncle to some other physician? There were plenty of them in Paris. Possibly he had believed himself cured of his folly until the sight of Claire undeceived him? But no, he had asked her father for her hand in marriage before he saw her again. But, in his delirium, Francis answered all or nearly all of these questions. Claire, bending tenderly over him, listened breathlessly to his every word, and afterward repeated them to her mother and to the doctor, who was not long in discovering the truth. They soon knew that he had lost his reason and under what circumstances; they even learned how he had been

the innocent cause of his uncle's insanity. Fears of an entirely different nature now began to assail Mlle. Auvray. Was the terrible crisis which she had unwittingly brought about likely to cure his mental disorder? The doctor assured his daughter that a fever, under such circumstances, was almost certain to put an end to the insanity, but there is no rule without its exception, especially in medicine. And even if he seemed to be cured, was there not danger of a recurrence of the malady?

"So far as I am concerned, I am not in the least afraid," said Claire, smiling sadly. "I am the cause of all his troubles. Therefore, it is my duty to console him. After all, his madness consists merely in continually asking my hand. There will be no need of doing that after I become his wife, so we really have nothing to fear. The poor fellow lost his reason through his excessive love; so cure him, my dear father, but not entirely. Let him remain insane enough to love me as much as I love him!"

"We will see," replied Dr. Auvray. "Wait until this fever passes off. If he seems ashamed of having been demented, if he appears gloomy, or melancholy after his recovery, I can not vouch for him; if, on the contrary, he remembers his temporary aberration of mind without mortification or regret—if he speaks of it without any reserve, and if he is not averse to seeing the persons who nursed him through his illness, there

is not the slightest reason to apprehend a return of the malady."

On the 25th of December, Francis, fortified by a cup of chicken broth and half the yolk of a soft boiled egg, sat up in bed, and without the slightest hesitancy or mortification, and in a perfectly lucid manner, gave the history of the past three months without any emotion save that of quiet joy. Claire and Mme. Auvray wept as they listened to him; the doctor pretended to be taking notes, or rather to be writing under dictation, but something besides ink fell on the paper. When the story ended, the convalescent added, by way of conclusion:

"And now on this, the 25th day of December, I say to my good doctor, and much loved father —Dr. Auvray, whose street and number I shall never again forget—'Sir, you have a daughter, Mlle. Claire Auvray, whom I met at Ems, with her mother. I love her; she has proved that she loves me in return, and if you have no fears that I will become insane again, I have the honor to ask her hand in marriage."

The doctor was so deeply affected that he could only bow his head in token of assent, but Claire put her arms around the sick man's neck and kissed him tenderly on the forehead. I am sure I should desire no better response under like circumstances.

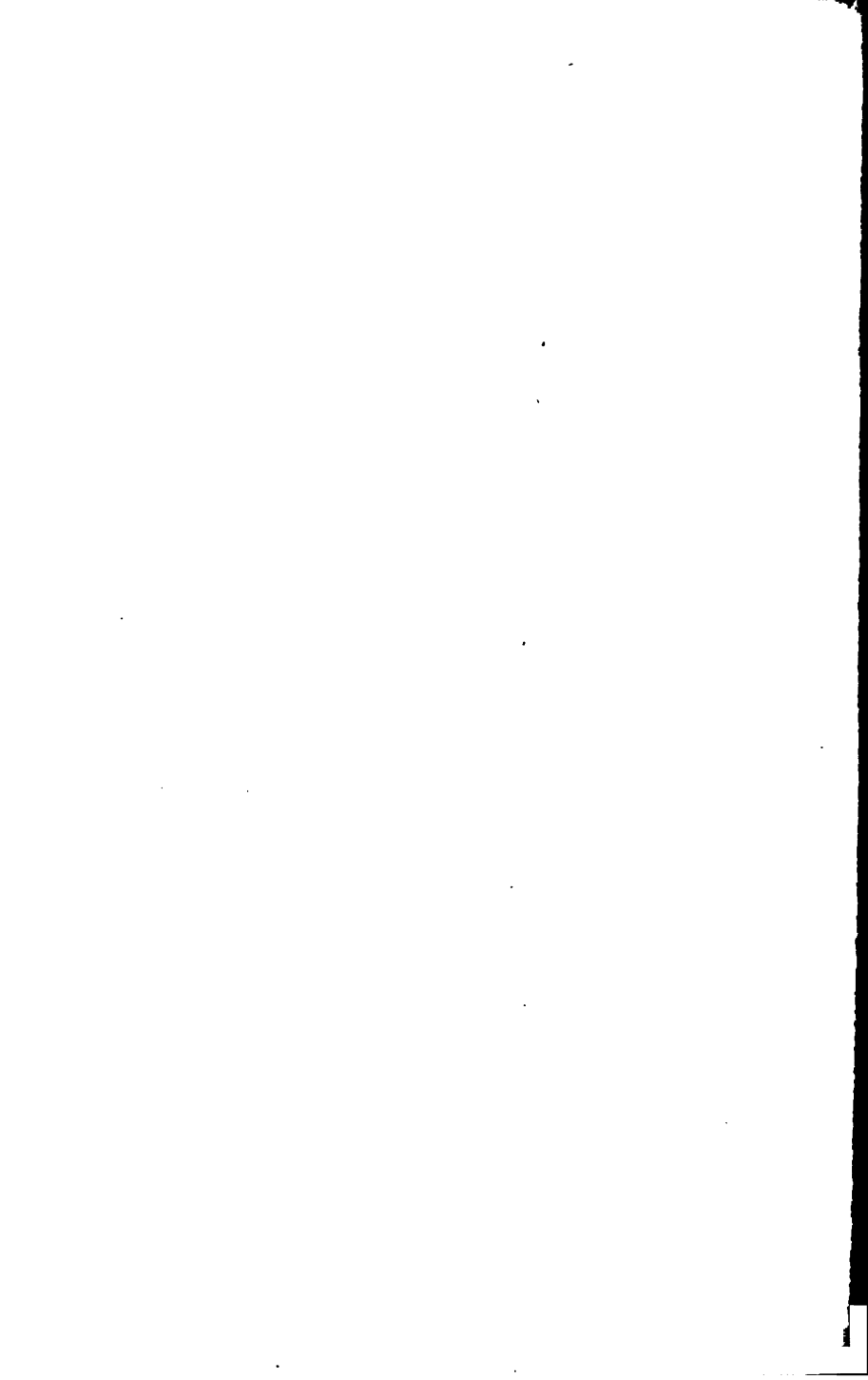
That same day, M. Morlot, who had become much more quiet and tractable, and who had

long since been released from the bondage of a strait-jacket, rose about eight o'clock in the morning, as usual. On getting out of bed, he picked up his slippers, examined and reexamined them inside and out, then handed them to a nurse for inspection, begging him to see for himself that they contained no thirty thousand francs. Until positively assured of this fact he would not consent to put them on. Then he carefully shook each of his garments out of the window, but not until after he had searched every fold and pocket in them. After his toilet was completed, he called for a pencil, and wrote on the walls of his chamber:

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's money, nor anything that is his."

Dr. Auvray is confident of his ability to cure him, but it will take time. It is in the summer and autumn that physicians are most successful in their endeavors to cure insanity.

THE RENDEZVOUS

BY IVAN TURGENEV

THE RENDEZVOUS

BY IVAN TURGENEV

I WAS sitting in a birch grove in autumn, near the middle of September. It had been drizzling ever since morning; occasionally the sun shone warmly—the weather was changeable. Now the sky was overcast with watery white clouds, now it suddenly cleared up for an instant, and then the bright, soft azure, like a beautiful eye, appeared from beyond the dispersed clouds. I was sitting looking about me and listening. The leaves were slightly rustling over my head; and by their very rustle one could tell what season of the year it was. It was not the gay, laughing palpitation of spring; not a soft whispering, nor the lingering chatter of summer, nor the timid and cold lisping of late autumn, but a barely audible, drowsy prattle. A faint breeze was whisking over the tree-tops. The interior of the grove, moist from the rain, was forever changing, as the sun shone or hid beyond the clouds; now the grove was all illuminated as if everything in it had burst into a smile; the trunks of the birch trees suddenly assumed the soft reflection of white silk; the small leaves which lay scattered on the ground all at once be-

came variegated and flashed up like red gold; and the pretty stalks of the tall, branchy ferns, already tinted in their autumn hue, resembling the color of overripe grapes, appeared here and there tangling and crossing one another. Now again everything suddenly turned blue; the bright colors died out instantaneously, the birch trees stood all white, lustreless, like snow which had not yet been touched by the coldly playing rays of the winter sun—and stealthily, slyly, a drizzling rain began to sprinkle and whisper over the forest. The leaves on the birches were almost all green yet, though they had turned somewhat pale; only here and there stood a solitary young little birch, all red or all golden, and one should have seen how brightly these birches flushed in the sun when its rays suddenly appeared gliding and flashing through the dense net of the thin branches which had just been washed around by the sparkling rain. Not a single bird was heard; all had found shelter, and were silent; only rarely the mocking voice of the bluebird sang out like a little steel bell. Before stopping in this birch forest I passed with my dog through a poplar grove. I confess I am not very fond of the poplar tree with its pale lilac-colored trunk and its grayish-green, metallic leaves, which it lifts high and spreads in the air like a trembling fan—I do not like the constant shaking of its round, untidy leaves, which are so awkwardly attached to long stems. The poplar is pretty only on certain sum-

mer evenings when, rising high amid the low shrubbery, it stands against the red rays of the setting sun, shining and trembling, bathed from root to top in uniform yellowish purple—or when, on a clear windy day, it rocks noisily, lisping against the blue sky, and each leaf seems as if eager to tear itself away, to fly and hurry off into the distance. But in general I do not like this tree, and, therefore, not stopping to rest in the poplar grove, I made my way to the birch forest, and seated myself under a tree whose branches started near the ground, and thus could protect me from the rain. Having admired the surrounding view, I fell asleep—I slept that tranquil, sweet sleep which is familiar to hunters only.

I can not say how long I slept, but when I opened my eyes the entire interior of the forest was filled with sunshine, and everywhere the bright blue sky was flashing through the cheerfully droning leaves; the clouds disappeared, driven asunder by the wind which had begun to play; the weather was clear now, and one felt in the air that peculiar, dry freshness which, filling the heart with a certain vigorous sensation, almost always predicts a quiet, clear night after a rainy day. I was about to rise and try my luck at hunting again, when my eyes suddenly fell on a motionless human figure. I gazed at it fixedly; it was a young peasant girl. She was sitting some twenty feet away from me, her head bowed

pensively and her hands dropped on her knees; in one hand, which was half open, lay a heavy bunch of field flowers, and every time she breathed the flowers were softly gliding over her checkered skirt. A clear white shirt, buttoned at the neck and the wrists, fell in short, soft folds about her waist; large yellow beads were hanging down from her neck on her bosom in two rows. She was not at all bad-looking. Her heavy fair hair, of a beautiful ash color, parted in two neatly combed half-circles from under a narrow, dark-red head-band, which was pulled down almost to her ivory-white forehead; the rest of her face was slightly tanned with the golden sunburn peculiar to a tender skin. I could not see her eyes—she did not lift them; but I saw her thin, high eyebrows, her long lashes; these were moist, and on her cheek gleamed a dried-up teardrop, which had stopped near her somewhat pale lips. Her entire small head was very charming; even her somewhat thick and round nose did not spoil it. I liked especially the expression of her face; it was so simple and gentle, so sad and so full of childish perplexity before her own sadness. She was apparently waiting for some one. Something cracked faintly in the forest. Immediately she raised her head and looked around; her eyes flashed quickly before me in the transparent shade—they were large, bright, and shy like a deer's. She listened for a few seconds, not moving her wide-open eyes from the spot whence the

faint sound had come; she heaved a sigh, turned her head slowly, bent down still lower and began to examine the flowers. Her eyelids turned red, her lips quivered bitterly and a new teardrop rolled down from under her heavy eyelashes, stopping and sparkling on her cheek. Thus quite a long while passed; the poor girl did not stir—only occasionally she moved her hands and listened—listened all the time. Something cracked once more in the forest—she started. This time the noise did not stop, it was becoming more distinct, it was nearing—at last firm footsteps were heard. She straightened herself, and it seemed as if she lost her courage, for her eyes began to quiver. The figure of a man appeared through the jungle. She looked fixedly, suddenly flushed, and, smiling joyously and happily, seemed about to rise, but she immediately cast down her head again, turned pale, confused—only then she lifted her quivering, almost prayerful, eyes to the man as he paused beside her.

I looked at him from my hiding-place with curiosity. I confess he did not produce a pleasant impression upon me. He was, by all appearances, a spoiled valet of some rich young man. His clothes betokened a claim to taste and smart carelessness. He wore a short top-coat of bronze color, which evidently belonged to his master, and which was buttoned up to the very top; he had on a pink necktie with lilac-colored edges; and his black velvet cap, trimmed with gold

stripes, was pulled over his very eyebrows. The round collar of his white shirt propped his ears up and cut his cheeks mercilessly, and the starched cuffs covered his hands up to his red, crooked fingers, which were ornamented with silver and gold rings, set with forget-me-nots of turquoise. His red, fresh, impudent face belonged to those countenances which, as far as I have observed, are almost always repulsive to men, but, unfortunately, are often admired by women. Apparently trying to give an expression of contempt and of weariness to his rough features, he was forever closing his small, milky-gray eyes, knitting his brows, lowering the corners of his lips, yawning forcedly, and, with careless, although not too clever, ease, now adjusting his reddish, smartly twisted temple-curls, now fingering the yellow hair which bristled upon his thick upper lip—in a word, he was making an insufferable display of himself. He started to do this as soon as he noticed the young peasant girl who was awaiting him. He advanced to her slowly, with large strides, then stood for a while, twitched his shoulders, thrust both hands into the pockets of his coat, and, casting a quick and indifferent glance at the poor girl, sank down on the ground.

"Well?" he began, continuing to look aside, shaking his foot and yawning. "Have you waited long?"

The girl could not answer him at once.

"Long, Victor Alexandrich," she said at last, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Ah!" He removed his cap, majestically passed his hand over his thick, curly hair whose roots started almost at his eyebrows, and, looking around with dignity, covered his precious head again cautiously. "And I almost forgot all about it. Besides, you see, it's raining." He yawned again. "I have a lot of work to do; you can't look after everything, and he is yet scolding. We are leaving to-morrow—"

"To-morrow?" uttered the girl, and fixed a frightened look upon him.

"To-morrow— Come, come, come, please," he replied quickly, vexed, noticing that she quivered, and bowed her head in silence. "Please, Akulina, don't cry. You know I can't bear it" (and he twitched his flat nose). "If you don't stop, I'll leave you right away. What nonsense—to whimper!"

"Well, I shan't, I shan't," said Akulina hastily, swallowing the tears with an effort. "So you're going away to-morrow?" she added, after a brief silence. "When will it please God to have me meet you again, Victor Alexandrich?"

"We'll meet, we'll meet again. If it isn't next year, it'll be later. My master, it seems, wants to enter the service in St. Petersburg," he went on, pronouncing the words carelessly and somewhat indistinctly. "And it may be that we'll go abroad."

"You will forget me, Victor Alexandrich," said Akulina sadly.

"No—why should I? I'll not forget you, only you had rather be sensible; don't make a fool of yourself; obey your father— And I'll not forget you— Oh, no; oh, no." And he stretched himself calmly and yawned again.

"Do not forget me, Victor Alexandrich," she resumed in a beseeching voice. "I have loved you so much, it seems—all, it seems, for you— You tell me to obey father, Victor Alexandrich— How am I to obey my father—?"

"How's that?" He pronounced these words as if from the stomach, lying on his back and holding his hands under his head.

"Why, Victor Alexandrich—you know it yourself—"

She fell silent. Victor fingered his steel watch-chain.

"Akulina, you are not a foolish girl," he said at last, "therefore don't talk nonsense. It's for your own good, do you understand me? Of course, you are not foolish, you're not altogether a peasant, so to say, and your mother wasn't always a peasant either. Still, you are without education—therefore you must obey when you are told to."

"But it's terrible, Victor Alexandrich."

"Oh, what nonsense, my dear—what is she afraid of! What is that you have there," he added, moving closer to her, "flowers?"

"Flowers," replied Akulina sadly. "I have picked some field tansies," she went on, with some animation. "They're good for the calves. And here I have some marigolds—for scrofula. Here, look, what a pretty flower! I haven't seen such a pretty flower in all my life. Here are forget-me-nots, and—and these I have picked for you," she added, taking from under the tansies a small bunch of cornflowers, tied around with a thin blade of grass; "do you want them?"

Victor held out his hand lazily, took the flowers, smelt them carelessly, and began to turn them around in his fingers, looking up with thoughtful importance. Akulina gazed at him. There was so much tender devotion, reverent obedience, and love in her pensive eyes. She at once feared him, and yet she dared not cry, and inwardly she bade him farewell, and admired him for the last time; and he lay there, stretched out like a sultan, and endured her admiration with magnanimous patience and condescension. I confess I was filled with indignation as I looked at his red face, which betrayed satisfied selfishness through his feigned contempt and indifference. Akulina was so beautiful at this moment. All her soul opened before him trustingly and passionately—it reached out to him, caressed him, and he— He dropped the cornflowers on the grass, took out from the side-pocket of his coat a round glass in a bronze frame and began to force it into his eye; but no matter how hard

he tried to hold it with his knitted brow, his raised cheek, and even with his nose, the glass dropped out and fell into his hands.

"What's this?" asked Akulina at last, with surprise.

"A lorgnette," he replied importantly.

"What is it for?"

"To see better."

"Let me see it."

Victor frowned, but gave her the glass.

"Look out; don't break it."

"Don't be afraid, I'll not break it." She lifted it timidly to her eye.

"I can't see anything," she said naively.

"Shut your eye," he retorted in the tone of a dissatisfied teacher. She closed the eye before which she held the glass.

"Not that eye, not that one, you fool! The other one!" exclaimed Victor, and, not allowing her to correct her mistake, he took the lorgnette away from her.

Akulina blushed, laughed slightly, and turned away.

"It seems it's not for us."

"Of course not!"

The poor girl maintained silence, and heaved a deep sigh.

"Oh, Victor Alexandrich, how will I get along without you?" she said suddenly.

Victor wiped the lorgnette and put it back into his pocket.

"Yes, yes," he sail at last. "At first it will really be hard for you." He tapped her on the shoulder condescendingly; she quietly took his hand from her shoulder and kissed it. "Well, yes, yes, you are indeed a good girl," he went on, with a self-satisfied smile; "but it can't be helped! Consider it yourself! My master and I can't stay here, can we? Winter is near, and to pass the winter in the country is simply nasty—you know it yourself. It's a different thing in St. Petersburg! There are such wonders over there that you could not imagine even in your dreams, you silly— What houses, what streets, and society, education—it's something wonderful!—" Akulina listened to him with close attention, slightly opening her lips like a child. "However," he added, wriggling on the ground, "why do I say all this to you? You can't understand it anyway!"

"Why not, Victor Alexandrich? I understood, I understood everything."

"Just think of her!"

Akulina cast down her eyes.

"You did not speak to me like this before, Victor Alexandrich," she said, without lifting her eyes.

"Before?— Before! Just think of her!— Before!" he remarked, indignantly.

Both grew silent.

"However, it's time for me to go," said Victor, and leaned on his elbow, about to rise.

"Wait a little," said Akulina in an imploring voice.

"What for? I have already said to you, Good-by!"

"Wait," repeated Akulina.

Victor again stretched himself on the ground and began to whistle. Akulina kept looking at him steadfastly. I could see that she was growing agitated by degrees—her lips twitched, her pale cheeks were reddening.

"Victor Alexandrich," she said at last in a broken voice, "it's a sin for you, it's a sin, Victor Alexandrich, by God!"

"What's a sin?" he asked, knitting his brows. He raised his head and turned to her.

"It's a sin, Victor Alexandrich. If you would only say a good word to me before leaving—if you would only say one word to me, miserable little orphan that I am—"

"But what shall I say to you?"

"I don't know. You know better than I do, Victor Alexandrich. Here you are going away—if you would only say one word— What have I done to deserve this?"

"How strange you are! What can I say?"

"If only one word—"

"There she's firing away one and the same thing," he muttered with vexation, and got up.

"Don't be angry, Victor Alexandrich," she added hastily, unable to repress her tears.

"I'm not angry—only you are foolish— What

do you want? I can't marry you! I can't, can I? Well, then, what do you want? What?" He stared at her, as if awaiting an answer, and opened his fingers wide.

"I want nothing—nothing," she replied, stammering, not daring to outstretch her trembling hands to him, "but simply so, at least one word, at parting—"

And the tears began to stream from her eyes.

"Well, there you are, she's started crying," said Victor indifferently, pulling the cap over his eyes.

"I don't want anything," she went on, sobbing and covering her face with her hands; "but how will I feel now at home, how will I feel? And what will become of me, what will become of me, wretched one that I am? They'll marry the poor little orphan off to a man she does not like. My poor little head!"

"Keep on singing, keep on singing," muttered Victor in a low voice, stirring restlessly.

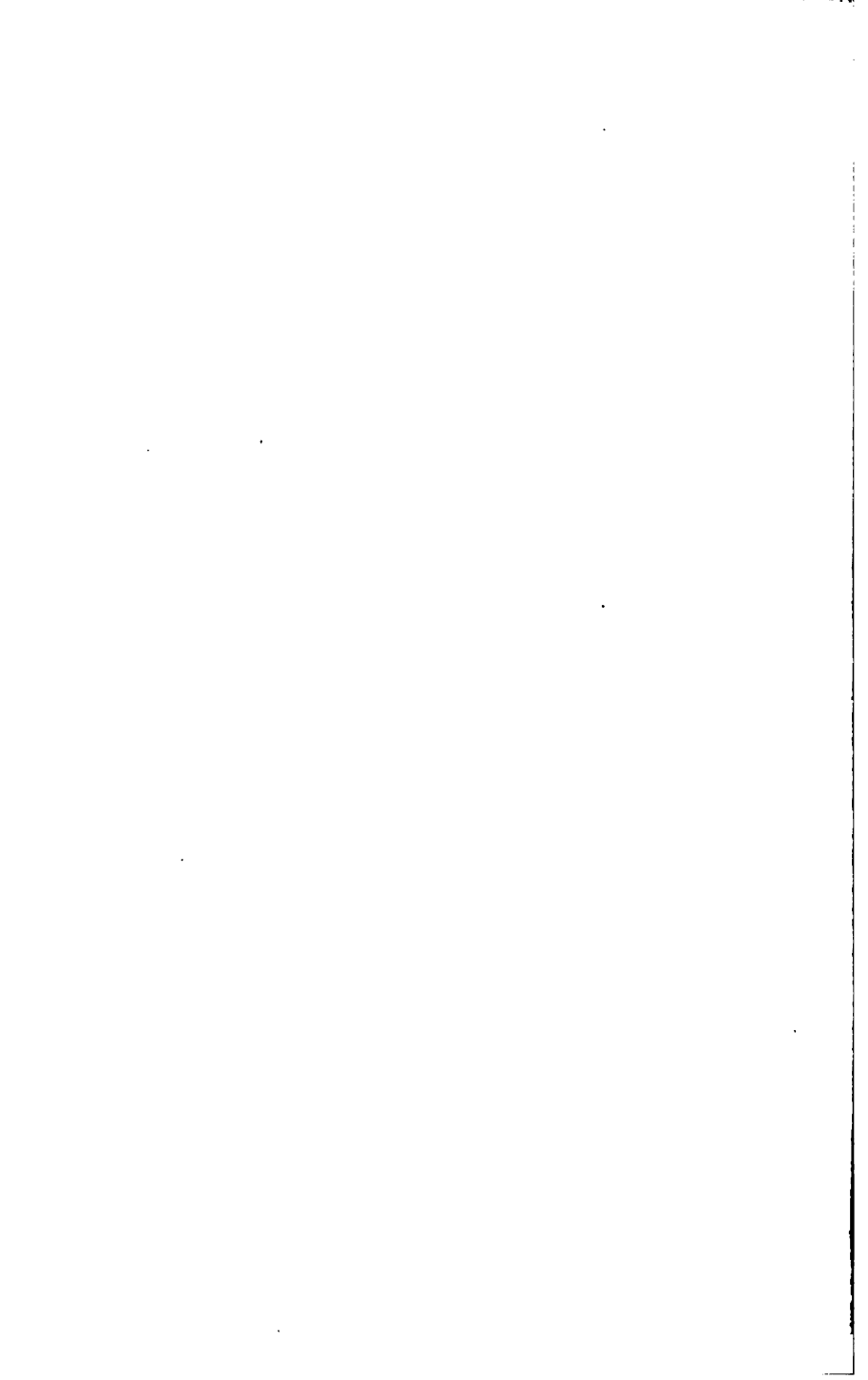
"If you only said one word, just one: 'Akulina —I—' "

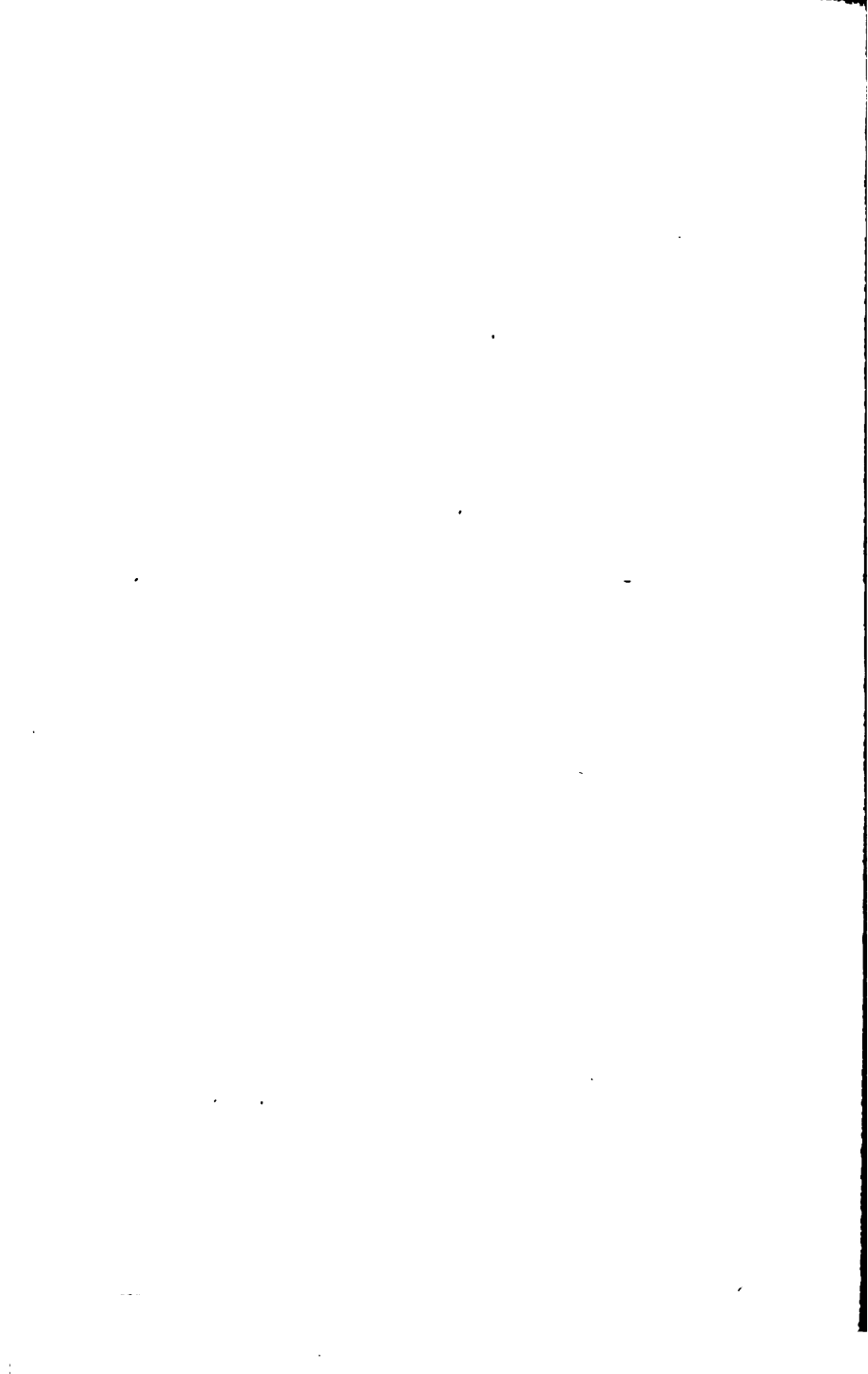
Sudden heartrending sobs interrupted her. She fell with her face upon the grass and cried bitterly, bitterly— All her body shook convulsively, the back of her neck seemed to rise— The long-suppressed sorrow at last burst forth in a stream of tears. Victor stood a while near her, then he shrugged his shoulders, turned around and walked off with large steps.

A few moments went by. She grew silent, lifted her head, looked around and clasped her hands; she was about to run after him, but her feet failed her—she fell down on her knees. I could not endure it any longer and rushed over to her; but before she had time to look at me, she suddenly seemed to have regained her strength—and with a faint cry she rose and disappeared behind the trees, leaving the scattered flowers on the ground.

I stood a while, picked up the bunch of cornflowers, and walked out of the grove to the field. The sun was low in the pale, clear sky; its rays seemed to have faded and turned cold; they did not shine now, they spread in an even, almost watery, light. There was only a half-hour left until evening, and twilight was setting in. A violent wind was blowing fast toward me across the yellow, dried-up stubble-field; the small withered leaves were carried quickly past me across the road; the side of the grove which stood like a wall by the field trembled and flashed clearly, but not brightly; everywhere on the reddish grass, on the blades, and the straw, innumerable autumn cobwebs flashed and trembled. I stopped. I began to feel sad; it seemed a dismal fear of approaching winter was stealing through the gay, though fresh, smile of fading nature. High above me, a cautious raven flew by, heavily and sharply cutting the air with his wings; then he turned his head, looked at me sidewise, and,

croaking abruptly, disappeared beyond the forest; a large flock of pigeons rushed past me from a barn, and, suddenly whirling about in a column, they came down and stationed themselves bustlingly upon the field—a sign of spring autumn! Somebody rode by beyond the bare hillock, making much noise with an empty wagon.

I returned home, but the image of poor Akulina did not leave my mind for a long time, and the cornflowers, long withered, are in my possession to this day.

NAPOLEON AND POPE PIUS VII

BY ALFRED VICTOR, COMTE DE VIGNY

NAPOLEON AND POPE PIUS VII

BY ALFRED VICTOR, COMTE DE VIGNY

WE were at Fontainebleau. The Pope had just arrived. The Emperor had awaited him with great impatience, as he desired the Holy Father to crown him. Napoleon received him in person, and they immediately entered the carriage—on opposite sides, at the same time, apparently with an entire neglect of etiquette, but this was only in appearance, for the movement was thoroughly calculated. It was so arranged that neither might seem to yield precedence or to exact it from the other. The ruse was characteristically Italian. They at once drove toward the palace, where all kinds of rumors were in circulation. I had left several officers in the room which preceded that of the Emperor; and I was quite alone in his apartment.

I was standing looking at a long table, which was of Roman mosaic work, and which was absolutely loaded, covered with heaps of papers. I had often seen Napoleon enter, and submit the pile of documents to a strange system of decision.

Translated by J. Matthewman.

hastily closed the door after the old man with the care of a jailer. I will confess that I was in a state of mortal terror at being the third of the party. However, I remained motionless, listening eagerly to every word that was said.

The Pope was tall; his face was long, yellow, and had traces of great suffering, but bore the imprint of a goodness of soul and nobility of spirit which knew no bounds. He had fine, big, black eyes, and his mouth was sweetened by a smile which lent something spirituelle and vivacious to his countenance. It was a smile in which one could detect nothing of the cunning of the world, but which was full to overflowing of Christian goodness. On his head he wore a skull cap, from under which escaped locks of his silver-streaked hair. A red velvet cloak hung negligently on his stooping shoulders, and his robe dragged at his feet. He entered slowly, with the calm and prudent step of an aged man, sank down into one of the big Roman armchairs, which were gilded and covered with eagles, lowered his eyes, and waited to hear what the other Italian had to say to him.

What a scene that was! I can see it still. It was not the genius of the man which I noticed, but his character. Bonaparte was not then as you knew him afterward; he had grown gross—he had not the swollen face, the gouty legs, nor was he so ridiculously stout as he afterward became. Unfortunately, in art he is almost always

represented by a sort of caricature, so that he will not be handed down to posterity as he really was. He was not ungainly then, but nervous and supple, lithe and active, convulsive in some of his gestures, in some gracious; his chest was flat and narrow—in short, he looked just as I had seen him at Malta.

He did not stop stalking round the room when the Pope entered. He wandered round the chair of the latter like a cautious hunter; then suddenly halting in front of Pius, he resumed a conversation which had been commenced in the carriage, and which he was evidently anxious to continue.

"I tell you again, Holy Father, I am not a free-thinker; and I don't agree with those who are forever reasoning about religious matters. I assure you that in spite of my old republicans I shall go to mass."

The last words he threw bruskly, as it were, in the Pope's face—incense of flattery undisguised. Then he suddenly stopped and examined the Pope's countenance to catch the result, which he seemed to expect to be great. The old man lowered his eyes and rested his hands on the heads of the eagles which formed the arms of the chair. He seemed to have assumed the attitude of a Roman statue purposely, as if wishing to express: I resign myself to hearing all the profane things that he may choose to say to me!

Bonaparte took a turn round the room, and

round the chair which was in the middle, and it was plain to be seen that he was not satisfied either with himself or with his adversary, and that he was reproaching himself for having resumed the conversation so rashly. So he began to talk more connectedly as he walked round the room, all the time watching narrowly the reflection of the pontiff's face in the mirror, and also eying him carefully in profile as he passed; but not venturing to look him full in the face for fear of appearing too anxious about the effect of his words.

"There is one thing that hurts me very much, Holy Father," said he, "and that is that you consent to the coronation as you formerly consented to the Concordat—as if you were compelled to do so, and not as of free will. You sit there before me with the air of a martyr, resigned to the will of heaven, and suffering for the sake of your conscience. But that is not the fact. You are not a prisoner. You are as free as the air."

Pius VII smiled and looked his interlocutor in the face. He realized that the despotic nature with which he had to contend was not satisfied with obedience unless one seemed willing, even anxious, to obey.

"Yes," continued Bonaparte, "you are quite free. You may return to Rome if you like. The road is open and no one will stop you."

Without uttering a word, the Pope sighed and raised his hand and his eyes to heaven; then very

slowly he lowered his eyes and studied the cross on his bosom attentively.

Bonaparte continued to walk round the room and to talk to his captive, his voice becoming sweeter and more wheedling.

"Holy Father, were it not for the reverence I have for you I should be inclined to say that you are a little ungrateful. You seem to ignore entirely the services which France has rendered you. As far as I am able to judge, the Council of Venice, which elected you Pope, was influenced somewhat by my campaign in Italy, as well as by a word which I spoke for you. I was very much troubled at the time that Austria treated you so badly. I believe that your Holiness was obliged to return to Rome by sea for fear of passing through Austrian territory."

He stopped for the answer of his silent guest; Pius VII made simply the slightest inclination of the head, and remained plunged in a melancholy reverie which seemed to prevent him from hearing Napoleon.

Bonaparte then pushed a chair near to that of the Pope. I started, for in seeking the chair he had come very near my hiding-place, he even brushed the curtains which concealed me.

"It was as a Catholic really that I was so afflicted about your vexations. I have never had much time to study theology, it is true, but I maintain a great faith in the Church. She has a wonderful vitality, Holy Father, although Vol-

tairé did you some little harm, certainly. Now if you are only willing we can do a great deal of work together in the future."

He assumed a caressing, wheedling air of innocence.

"Really, I have tried to understand your motives, but I can't for the life of me see what objection you can have to making Paris your seat. I'll leave the Tuileries to you if you like. You'll find your room waiting for you there. I scarcely ever go there myself. Don't you see, Father, it is the capital of the world. I'll do whatever you want me to; and really, after all, I am not as bad as I am painted. If you'll leave war and politics to me you may do as you like in ecclesiastical matters. In fact, I would be your soldier. Now wouldn't that be a grand arrangement? We could hold our councils like Constantine and Charlemagne—I would open and dissolve them; and then I would put the keys of the world into your hands, for as our Lord said: 'I came with a sword,' and I would keep the sword; I would only bring it to you for your blessing after each new success of our arms."

The Pope, who until then had remained as motionless as an Egyptian statue, slowly raised his head, smiled sadly, lifted his eyes to heaven, and said, after a gentle sigh, as if he were confiding the thought to his invisible guardian angel:

"Commediante!"

Napoleon leaped from his chair like a wounded

tiger. He was in one of his "yellow tempers." At first he stamped about without uttering a word, biting his lips till the blood came. He no longer circled round his prey cautiously, but walked from end to end of the room with firm resounding steps, and clinking his spurs noisily. The room shook; the curtains trembled like trees at the approach of a storm; I thought that something terrible would surely happen; my hair began to bristle, and I put my hand to my head unwittingly. I looked at the Pope. He did not stir, but simply pressed the heads of the eagles with his hands.

The storm burst violently.

"Comedian! What? I, a comedian? Indeed, I'll play some comedies for you that will set you all a-weeping like women and children! Comedian, forsooth! You are mistaken if you think that you may insult me with impunity. My theatre is the world; the rôle that I play is the double one of master and actor; I use all of you as comedians, popes, kings, peoples, and the string by which I work you—*you* my puppets—is fear. You would need to be a much heavier man than you are, Signor Chiaramonti, to dare to applaud or hiss me. Do you know that if it be my will you will become a simple *curé?* As for you and your tiara, France would mock at you if I did not seem to be serious in saluting you.

"Only four years ago nobody dared speak of

Christ. Had that state of things continued who would have cared for the Pope, I should like to know? Comedian! You gentlemen are a little too ready at getting a foothold among us. And now you are dissatisfied because I am not such a fool as to sign away the liberties of France as did Louis XIV. But you had better not sing to me in that tune. It is I who hold you between my thumb and finger; it is I who can carry you from north to south and then back again to the north like so many marionettes; it is I who give you some stability because you represent an old idea which I wish to resuscitate; and you have not enough wit to see that, and to act as if you were not aware of the fact. Now I'll speak to you frankly. Trouble your head with your own affairs and don't interfere in what you don't understand and with what doesn't in the least concern you. You seem to think that you are necessary, you set yourselves up as if you were of some weight, and you dress yourselves in women's clothes. But I'll let you know that you don't impose on me with all that; and if you don't change your tactics very soon I'll treat your robes as Charles XII did that of the Grand Vizier—I'll tear them with my spur."

Then he ceased. I scarcely dared breathe. I advanced my head a little, not hearing his voice, to see if the poor old priest was dead with fright. The same absolutely calm attitude, the same calm expression on his face. For the second time he

raised his eyes to heaven, again he sighed, and smiled bitterly as he murmured:

"Tragediante!"

Bonaparte was at the farther end of the room, leaning against a marble chimney which was as high as he was tall. Like an arrow shot out of a bow, he rushed straight at the old man; I thought he was going to kill him as he sat. But he suddenly stopped short, seized a Sèvres vase on which the Capitol was painted, threw it on the hearth and ground it under his heels. Then he remained terribly quiet.

I was relieved, for I felt that his reason had got the better of his temper. He became sad, and when he finally spoke in a deep voice, it was evident that in the two words uttered by the Pope he had recognized his true portrait.

"Miserable life!" he said. Then he fell into reverie, and without speaking tore the brim of his hat. When his voice again was heard he was talking to himself:

"It's true. Tragedian or comedian, I am always playing a part—all is costume and pose. How wearying it all is, and how belittling. Pose! pose! always pose! In one case full face, in another profile—but invariably for effect. Always trying to appear what others worship, so that I may deceive the fools, keeping them between hope and fear. Dazzling them by bulletins, by prestige. Master of all of them and not knowing what to do with them. That's the simple

truth after all. And to make myself so miserable through it all! It really is too much. For," continued he, sitting down in an armchair and crossing his legs, "it bores me to death, the whole farce. As soon as I sit down I don't know what to do with myself. I can't even hunt for three days in succession at Fontainebleau without being weary of it. I must always be moving and making others move. I speak quite frankly. I have plans in my life which would require the lives of forty emperors to carry out, and I make new ones every morning and evening; my imagination is always on the *qui vive;* but before I have carried out two of them I shall be exhausted in body and mind; for our poor lamp of life doesn't burn long enough. And I must confess that if I could carry them out I should not find that the world was one whit better than it is now; but it *would* be better though, for it would be united. I am not a philosopher. I don't understand many theories. Life is too short to stop. As soon as I have an idea I put it into execution. Others will find reasons after me for praising me if I succeed and for abusing me if I fail. Differences of opinion are active—they abound in France—but I keep them down while I am alive—afterward— Well, no matter! It is my business to succeed, and that I intend to do. Every day I make an Iliad by my actions—every day."

Thereupon he rose quickly. In that moment he was lively and natural, and was not thinking

of posing as he afterward did in St. Helena; he did not strive to make himself ideal or to pose for effect—he was himself outside of himself. He went back to the Pope, who had remained seated, and paced in front of him. Getting warmed up, he spoke with a dash of irony, at an incredible rate:

"Birth is everything. Those who come into the world poor and neglected are always desperate. That desperation turns to action or suicide according to character. When they have courage to attempt something as I have done, they raise the devil. But what else is to be done? One must live. One must find one's place and make one's mark. I have carried everything before me like a cannon-ball—all the worse for those who happened to be in my way. But what else could I have done? Each man eats according to his appetite, and I have an insatiable one. Do you know, Holy Father, at Toulon I had not wherewithal to buy myself a pair of epaulets, in place of which I had a mother and I don't know how many brothers on my shoulders. They are all satisfactorily settled at present. Josephine married me out of pity in spite of her old notary, who objected that I owned nothing but my cap and cape, and now we are going to crown her. The old man was right, though, as to what I possessed at that time. Imperial mantle! Crown! what does all that mean? Is it mine? Costume! Actor's costume! I will put them on for an hour

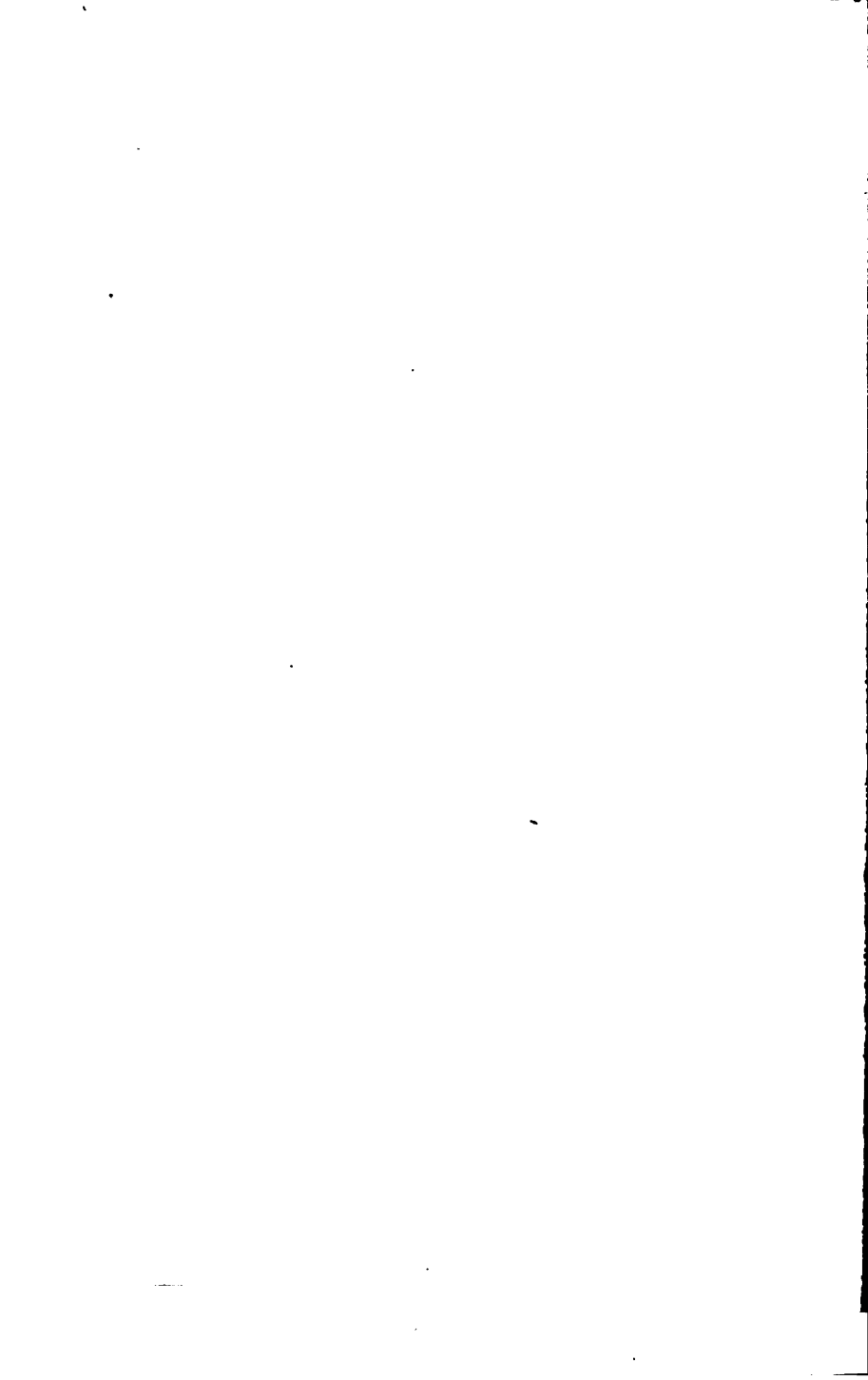
and then I shall have had enough of them. Then I shall don my officer's uniform, and 'To horse'; all my life on horseback. I couldn't pass a single day resting, without being in danger of falling out of the chair. I am to be envied? Eh?

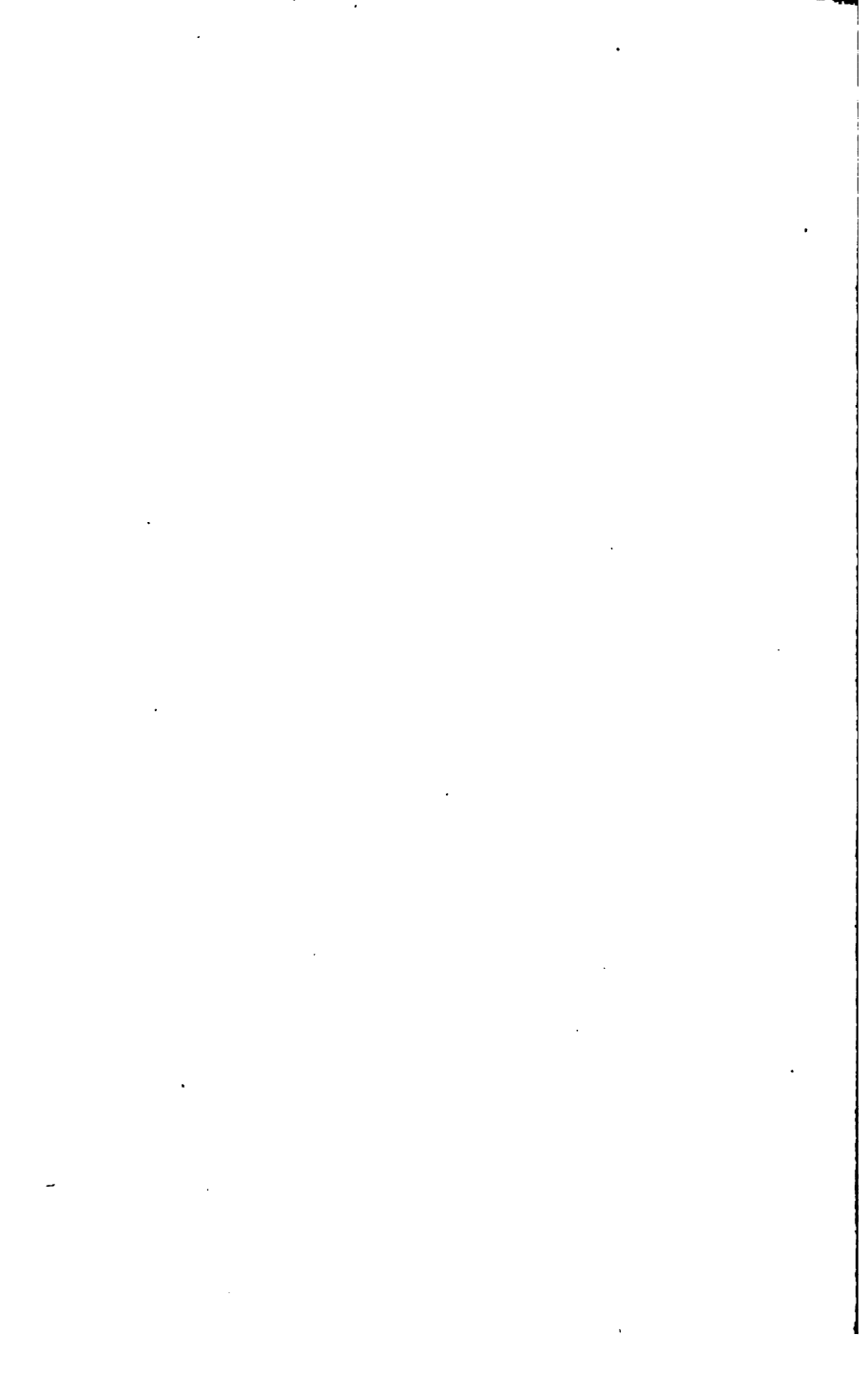
"I repeat, Holy Father; there are only two classes of men in the world: those who have and those who gain.

"Those who are in the first class rest, the others are restless. As I learned that lesson at an early age and to some purpose I shall go a long way. There are only two men who have done anything before they were forty years old; Cromwell and Jean-Jacques; if you had given one a farm, and the other twelve hundred francs and his servant, they would neither have commanded nor preached nor written. There are workmen in buildings, in colors, in forms, and in phrases; I am a workman in battles. It's my business. At the age of thirty-five I have manufactured eighteen of them, which are called 'Victories.' I must be paid for my work. And a throne is certainly not extravagant payment. Besides, I shall always go on working. You will see that all dynasties will date from mine, although I am a mere parvenu. I am elected as you are, Holy Father—and drawn from the multitude. On this point we can well shake hands."

And, approaching the Pope, Napoleon held out his hand. Pius took the hand which was of-

fered to him, but shook his head sadly, and I saw his fine eyes cloud with tears.

Bonaparte cast a hurried glance at the tears which he had wrung from the old Pope, and I surprised even a rapid motion in the corners of his mouth much resembling a smile of triumph. At that moment his intensely powerful and overbearing nature seemed to me less admirable than that of his saintly adversary; I blushed for all my past admiration of Napoleon; I felt a sadness creep over me at the thought that the grandest policy appears little when stained by tricks of vanity. I saw that the emperor had gained his end in the interview by having yielded nothing and by having drawn a sign of weakness from the Pope. He had wished to have the last word, and without uttering another syllable, he left the room as abruptly as he had entered. I could not see whether he saluted the Pope or not, but I do not think he did.

VALIA

BY LEONID ANDREIEV

VALIA

BY LEONID ANDREIEV

VALIA was reading a huge, very huge book, almost half as large as himself, with very black letters and pictures occupying the entire page. To see the top line Valia had to stretch out his neck, lean far over the table, kneeling in his chair, and putting his short chubby finger on the letters for fear they would be lost among the other ones like it, in which case it was a difficult task to find them again. Owing to these circumstances, unforeseen by the publishers, the reading advanced very slowly, notwithstanding the breath-catching interest of the book.

It was a story about a very strong boy whose name was Prince Bova, and who could, by merely grasping the legs or arms of other boys, wrench them away from the body.

But Valia was suddenly interrupted in his reading; his mother entered with some other woman.

"Here he is," said his mother, her eyes red with weeping. The tears had evidently been shed very recently as she was still crushing a white lace handkerchief in her hand.

"Valichka, darling!" exclaimed the other woman, and putting her arms about his head, she began to kiss his face and eyes, pressing her thin, hard lips to them. She did not fondle him as did his mother, whose kisses were soft and melting; this one seemed loath to let go of him. Valia accepted her pricking caresses with a frown and silence; he was very much displeased at being interrupted, and he did not at all like this strange woman, tall, with bony, long fingers upon which there was not even one ring. And she smelled so bad: a damp, moldly smell, while his mother always exhaled a fresh, exquisite perfume.

At last the woman left him in peace, and while he was wiping his lips she looked him over with that quick sort of glance which seemed to photograph one. His short nose with its indication of a future little hump, his thick, unchildish brows over dark eyes, and the general appearance of stern seriousness, recalled some one to her, and she began to cry. Even her weeping was unlike mama's: the face remained immovable while the tears quickly rolled down one after the other—before one had time to fall another was already chasing after it. Her tears ceased as suddenly as they had commenced, and she asked: "Valichka, do you know me?"—"No."

"I called to see you. Twice I called to see you."

Perhaps she had called upon him, perhaps she had called twice, but how should Valia know of

it? With her questions she only hindered him from reading.

"I am your mama, Valia!" said the woman.

Valia looked around in astonishment to find his mama, but she was no longer in the room.

"Why, can there be two mamas?" he asked. "What nonsense you are telling me."

The woman laughed, but this laugh did not please Valia; it was evident that the woman did not wish to laugh at all, and did it purposely to fool him. For some moments they were both silent.

"And what book is it you are reading?"

"About Prince Bova," Valia informed her with serious self-esteem and an evident respect for the big book.

"Ach, it must be very interesting! Tell me, please!" the woman asked with an ingratiating smile.

And once more something unnatural and false sounded in this voice, which tried to be soft and round like the voice of his mother, but remained sharp and prickly. The same insincerity appeared also in all the movements of the woman; she turned on her chair and even stretched out her neck with a manner as if preparing for a long and attentive listening; and when Valia reluctantly began the story, she immediately retired within herself, like a dark-lantern on which the cover is suddenly thrown. Valia felt the offense toward himself and Prince Bova, but, wishing to

be polite, he quickly finished the story and added: "That is all."

"Well, good-by, my dear, my dove!" said the strange woman, and once more pressed her lips to Valia's face. "I shall soon call again. Will you be glad?"

"Yes, come please," politely replied Valia, and to get rid of her more quickly he added: "I will be very glad."

The visitor left him, but hardly had Valia found in the book again the word at which he had been interrupted, when mama entered, looked at him, and she also began to weep. He could easily understand why the other woman should have wept; she must have been sorry that she was so unpleasant and tiresome—but why should his mama weep?

"Listen, mama," he said musingly, "how that woman bored me! She says that she is my mama. Why, could there be two mamas to one boy?"

"No, baby, there could not; but she speaks the truth; she is your mother."

"And what are you, then?"

"I am your auntie."

This was a very unexpected discovery, but Valia received it with unshakable indifference; auntie, well, let it be auntie—was it not just the same? A word did not, as yet, have the same meaning for him as it would for a grown person. But his former mother did not understand it, and began to explain why it had so happened that she

had been a mother and had become an aunt. Once, long ago, when Valia was very little—

"How little? So?" Valia raised his hand about a quarter of a yard from the table. "Like Kiska?" Valia exclaimed, joyfully surprised, with mouth opened and brow lifted. He spoke of his kitten that had been presented to him.

"Yes."

Valia broke into a happy laugh, but immediately resumed his usual earnestness, and with the condescension of a grown person recalling the mistakes of his youth, he remarked: "How funny I must have been!"

When he was so very little and funny, like Kiska, he had been brought by that woman and given away forever, also like Kiska. And now, when he had become so big and clever, the woman wanted him.

"Do you wish to go to her?" asked his former mother and reddened with joy when Valia resolutely and sternly said: "No, she does not please me!" and once more took up his book.

Valia considered the affair closed, but he was mistaken. This strange woman, with a face as devoid of life as if all the blood had been drained out of it, who had appeared from no one knew where, and vanished without leaving a trace, seemed to have set the whole house in turmoil and filled it with a dull alarm. Mama-auntie often cried and repeatedly asked Valia if he wished to leave her; uncle-papa grumbled, patted his bald

pate so that the sparse, gray hair on it stood up, and when auntie-mama was absent from the room he also asked Valia if he would like to go to that woman. Once, in the evening, when Valia was already in his little bed but was not yet sleeping, he heard his uncle and auntie speaking of him and the woman. The uncle spoke in an angry basso at which the crystal pendants of the chandelier gently trembled and sparkled with bluish and reddish lights.

"You speak nonsense, Nastasia Philippovna. We have no right to give the child away."

"She loves him, Grisha."

"And we! Do we not love him? You are arguing very strangely, Nastasia Philippovna. It seems as if you would be glad to get rid of the child—"

"Are you not ashamed of yourself?"

"Well, well, how quick you are to take offense. Just consider this matter cold-bloodedly and reasonably. Some frivolous thing or other gives birth to children, light-heartedly disposes of them by placing them on your threshold, and afterward says: 'Kindly give me my child, because, on account of my lover having abandoned me, I feel lonesome. For theatres and concerts I have no money, so give me the child to serve as a toy to play with.' No, madam, be easy, we shall see who wins in this case!"

"You are unjust to her, Grisha. You know well how ill and lonely she is—"

"You, Nastasia Philippovna, can make even a saint lose patience, by God! And the child you seem to have forgotten? For you is it wholly immaterial whether he is brought up an honest man or a scoundrel? And I could bet my head that he would be brought up by her a scoundrel, rascal, and—scoundrel."

"Grisha!"

"I ask you, for God's sake, not to irritate me! And where did you get this devilish habit of contradicting? 'She is so lonely.' And are *we* not lonely? The heartless woman that you are, Nastasia Philippovna! And why did I marry you!"

The heartless woman broke into tears, and her husband immediately begged her pardon, declaring that only a born fool could pay any attention to the words of such an old ass as he was. Gradually she became calmer and asked: "What does Talonsky say?"

"And what makes you think that he is such a clever fellow?" Gregory Aristarchovich again flew into a passion. "He says that everything depends on how the court will look at it. . . Something new, is it not, as if we did not know without his telling that everything depends on how the court will look at it! Of course it matters little to him—what does he care?—he will have his bark and then safely go his way. If I had *my* way, it would go ill with all these empty talkers—"

But here Nastasia Philippovna shut the dining-

room door and Valia did not hear the end of the conversation. But he lay for a long time with open eyes, trying to understand what sort of woman it was who wished to take him away from his home and ruin him.

On the next day he waited from early morning expecting his auntie to ask him if he wished to go to his mother; but auntie did not ask. Neither did his uncle. Instead of this, they both gazed at Valia as if he were dangerously ill and would soon die; they caressed him and brought him large books with colored pictures. The woman did not call any more, but it seemed to Valia that she must be lurking outside the door watching for him, and that as soon as he would pass the threshold she would seize him and carry him out into a black and dismal distance where cruel monsters were wriggling and breathing fire.

In the evenings while his uncle Gregory Aristarchovich was occupied in his study and Nastasia Philippovna was knitting something, or playing a game of solitaire, Valia read his books, in which the lines would grow gradually thicker and the letters smaller. Everything in the room was quiet, so quiet that the only thing to be heard was the rustling of the pages he turned, and occasionally the uncle's loud cough from the study, or the striking of the abacus counters. The lamp, with its blue shade, threw a bright light on the blue plush table-cover, but the corners of the room were full of a quiet, mysterious gloom.

There stood large plants with curious leaves and roots crawling out upon the surface and looking very much like fighting serpents, and it seemed as if something large and dark was moving amidst them. Valia read, and before his wide-open eyes passed terrible, beautiful and sad images which awakened in him pity and love, but more often fear. Valia was sorry for the poor water-nymph who so dearly loved the handsome prince that for him she had given up her sisters and the deep, peaceful ocean; and the prince knew nothing of this love, because the poor water-nymph was dumb, and so he married a gay princess; and while great festivities in honor of the wedding were in full swing on board the ship, and music was playing and all were enjoying themselves, the poor water-nymph threw herself into the dark waves to die. Poor, sweet little water-nymph, so quiet and sad, and modest! But often terrible, cruel, human monsters appeared before Valia. In the dark nights they flew somewhere on their prickly wings, and the air whistled over their heads, and their eyes burned like red-hot coals. And afterward, they were surrounded by other monsters like themselves while a mysterious and terrible something was happening there. Laughter as sharp as a knife, long and pitiful wailing; strange weird dances in the purplish light of torches, their slanty, fiery tongues wrapped in the red clouds of smoke; and dead men with long, black beards— All this was the

manifestation of a single enigmatic and cruel power, wishing to destroy man. Angry and mysterious spectres filled the air, hid among the plants, whispered something, and pointed their bony fingers at Valia; they gazed at him from behind the door of the adjoining unlit room, giggled and waited till he would go to bed, when they would silently dart around over his head; they peeped at him from out of the garden through the large, dark windows, and wailed sorrowfully with the wind.

In and out among all this vicious and terrible throng appeared the image of that woman who had come for Valia. Many people came and went in the house of Gregory Aristarchovich, and Valia did not remember their faces, but this face lived in his memory. It was such an elongated, thin, yellow face, and smiled with a sly, dissembling smile, from which two deep lines appeared at the two corners of the mouth. If this woman took Valia he would die.

"Listen," Valia once said to his aunt, tearing himself away from his book for a moment. "Listen," he repeated with his usual earnestness, and with a glance that gazed straight into the eyes of the person with whom he spoke: "I shall call you mama, not auntie. You talk nonsense when you say that the woman—is mama. You are mama, not she."

"Why?" asked Nastasia Philippovna, blushing like a young girl who had just received a com-

pliment. But along with her joy there could also be heard in her voice the sound of fear for Valia. He had become so strange of late, and timid; feared to sleep alone, as he used to do, raved in his sleep and cried.

"But, Valichka, it is true, she is your mother."

"I really wonder where you get this habit of contradicting!" Valia said after some musing, imitating the tone of Gregory Aristarchovich.

Nastasia Philippovna laughed, but while preparing for bed that night she spoke for a considerable time with her husband, who boomed like a Turkish drum, abused the empty talkers, and frivolous, hare-brained women, and afterward went with his wife to see Valia.

They gazed long and silently into the face of the sleeping child. The flame of the candle swayed in the trembling hand of Gregory Aristarchovich and lent a fantastic, death-like coloring to the face of the boy, which was as white as the pillows on which it rested. It seemed as if a pair of stern, black eyes looked at them from the dark hollows, demanding a reply and threatening them with misfortune and unknown sorrow, and the lips twitched into a strange, ironic smile as if upon his helpless child-head lay a vague reflection of those cruel and mysterious spectre monsters that silently hovered over it.

"Valia!" whispered the frightened Nastasia. The boy sighed deeply but did not move, as if enchained in the sleep of death.

"Valia! Valia!" the deep, trembling voice of her husband was added to that of Nastasia Philippovna.

Valia opened his eyes, shaded by thick eyelashes; the light of the candle made him wink, and he sprang to his knees, pale and frightened. His uncovered, thin little arms, like a pearl necklace encircled his auntie's full, rosy neck, and hiding his little head upon her breast and screwing up his eyes tight as if fearing that they would open of themselves, he whispered: "I am afraid, mama, I am afraid! Do not go!"

That was a bad night for the whole household; when Valia at last fell asleep, Gregory Aristarchovich got an attack of asthma. He choked, and his full, white breast rose and fell spasmodically under the ice compresses. Toward morning he grew more tranquil, and the worn Nastasia fell asleep with the thought that her husband would not survive the loss of the child.

After a family council at which it was decided that Valia ought to read less and to see more of children of his own age, little girls and boys were brought to the house to play with him. But Valia from the first conceived a dislike for these foolish children who, in his eyes, were too noisy, loud and indecorous. They pulled flowers, tore books, jumped over chairs, and fought like little monkeys; and he, serious and thoughtful, looked on at their pranks with amazement and displeasure, and, going up to Nastasia Philippovna,

said: "They tire me! I would rather sit by you." And in the evenings he once more took up his book, and when Gregory Aristarchovich, grumbling at all the deviltry the child read about, and by which he was losing his senses, gently tried to take the book from Valia's hands, the child silently and irresolutely pressed it to himself. And the improvised pedagogue beat a confused retreat and angrily scolded his wife:

"Is this what you call bringing up! No, Nastasia Philippovna, I see you are more fit to take care of kittens than to bring up children. The boy is so spoiled that one can not even take a book away from him."

One morning while Valia was sitting at breakfast with Nastasia Philippovna, Gregory Aristarchovich suddenly came rushing into the dining-room. His hat was tilted on the back of his head, his face was covered with perspiration; while still at the other side of the door he shouted joyfully into the room:

"Refused! The court has refused!"

The diamond earrings in Nastasia Philippovna's ears began to sparkle, and the little knife she held in her hand dropped to the plate.

"Is it true?" she asked, breathlessly.

Gregory Aristarchovich made a serious face, just to show that he had spoken the truth, but immediately forgetting his intention, his face became covered with a whole network of merry wrinkles. Then once more remembering that he

lacked that earnestness of demeanor with which important news is usually imparted, he frowned, pushed a chair up to the table, placed his hat upon it, forgot that it was his hat, and thinking the chair to be already occupied by some one, threw a stern look at Nastasia Philippovna, then on Valia, winked his eye at Valia; and only after all these solemn preliminaries did he declare:

"I always said that Talonsky was a devilish clever fellow; can't fool him easily, Nastasia Philippovna."

"So it is true?"

"You are always ready with your eternal doubts. I said the case of Mme. Akimova is dismissed. Clever, is it not, little brother?" he turned to Valia and added in a stern, official tone: "And that said Akimova is to pay the costs."

"That woman will not take me, then?"

"I guess she won't, brother mine! Ach, I have entirely forgotten, I brought you some books!"

Gregory Aristarchovich rushed into the corridor, but halted on hearing Nastasia Philippovna's scream. Valia had fallen back on his chair in a faint.

A happy time began for the family. It was as if some one who had lain dangerously ill in the house had suddenly recovered and all began to breathe more easily and freely. Valia lost his fear of the terrible monsters and no longer suffered from nightmares. When the little monkeys, as he called the children, came to see

him again, he was the most inventive of the lot. But even into the most fantastic plays he introduced his habitual earnestness and staidness, and when they played Indians, he found it indispensable to divest himself of almost all his clothing and cover his body with red paint.

In view of the businesslike manner in which these games were conducted, Gregory Aristarchovich now found it possible to participate in them, as far as his abilities allowed. In the rôle of a bear he did not appear to great advantage, but he had a great and well deserved success in his rôle of elephant. And when Valia, silent and earnest as a true son of the Goddess Kali, sat upon his father's shoulders and gently tapped upon his rosy bald pate with a tiny toy hammer, he really reminded one of a little Eastern prince who despotically reigns over people and animals.

The lawyer Talonsky tried to convey a hint to Gregory Aristarchovich that all was not safe yet, but the former could not comprehend how three judges could reverse the decision of three other judges, when the laws are the same here and everywhere. And when the lawyer insisted, Gregory Aristarchovich grew angry, and to prove that there was nothing to be feared from the higher court, he brought forward that same Talonsky on whom he now implicitly relied:

"Why, are you not going to be present when the case is brought before the court? Well, then what is there to be talked about. I wish you,

Nastasia Philippovna, would make him ashamed of himself."

Talonsky smiled, and Nastasia Philippovna gently chided him for his purposeless doubts. They also spoke of the woman who had caused all the trouble, but now that she could menace them no more, and the court had decided that she must bear all the costs of the trial, they often dubbed her "poor woman."

Since the day Valia had heard that the woman had no longer any power to take him, she had lost in his eyes the halo of mysterious fear, which enveloped her like a mist and distorted the features of her thin face, and Valia began to think of her as he did of all other people. He now repeatedly heard that she was unhappy and could not understand why; but this pale bloodless face grew more simple, natural and near to him, the "poor woman," as they called her, began to interest him, and recalling other poor women of whom he had read, he felt a growing pity and a timid tenderness for her.

He imagined that she must sit alone in some dark room, fearing something and weeping, always weeping, as she had wept then when she had come to see him. And he felt sorry that he had not told her the story of Prince Bova better than he had at the time.

. . . .

It appeared that three judges could, after all, disagree with the decision of three other judges.

The higher court had reversed the decision of the district court, the child was adjudged to his real mother. And the appeal was not considered by the senate.

When the woman came to take Valia away with her, Gregory Aristarchovich was not at home, he was at Talonsky's house and was lying in Talonsky's bedroom, and only the bald, rosy pate was visible above the snow-white pillows.

Nastasia Philippovna did not leave her room, and the maid led Valia forth from it already dressed for the road. He wore a fur coat and tall overshoes in which he moved his feet with difficulty. From under his fur cap looked out a pale little face with a frank and serious expression in the dark eyes. Under his arm Valia carried a book in which was the story of a poor water-nymph.

The tall, gaunt woman pressed the boy to her shabby coat and sobbed out: "How you have grown, Valichka! You are unrecognizable," she said, trying to joke, but Valia adjusted his cap and, contrary to habit, did not look into the eyes of the one who from this day on was to be his mother, but into her mouth. It was large, but with beautiful, small teeth; the two wrinkles on the corners of the mouth were still on the same place where Valia had seen them first, only now they were deeper.

"You are not angry with me?" asked mama; but Valia, not replying to her question, said: "Let us be gone."

"Valichka!" came a pitiful scream from Nastasia Philippovna's room, and she appeared on the threshold with eyes swollen from weeping, and clasping her hands she rushed toward the child, sank on her knees, and put her head on his shoulder. She did not utter a sound, only the diamonds in her ears trembled.

"Come, Valia," sternly said the tall woman, taking his hand. "We must not remain any longer among people who have subjected your mother to such torture—such torture!"

Her dry voice was full of hatred and she longed to strike the kneeling woman with her foot.

"Ugh! heartless wretches! You would be glad to take even my only child from me!" she wrathfully whispered, and pulled Valia away by his hand. "Come! Don't be like your father, who abandoned me."

"Ta-ke ca-re of him," Nastasia called after them.

The hired sleigh which stood waiting for them flew softly and lightly over the snow and noiselessly carried Valia away from the quiet house with its wonderful plants and flowers, its mysterious fairy-tale world, immeasurable and deep as the sea, with its windows gently screened by the boughs of the tall trees of the garden. Soon the house was lost in the mass of other houses, as similar to each other as the letters in Valia's book, and vanished forever from Valia.

It seemed to him as if they were swimming in

a river, the banks of which were constituted of rows of lanterns as close to each other as beads on a string, but when they approached nearer, the beads were scattered, forming large, dark spaces and merging behind into just such a line of light. And then Valia thought that they were standing motionless on the very same spot; and everything began to be like a fairy tale—he himself and the tall woman who was pressing him to her, and everything around him.

The hand in which he carried his book was getting stiff with cold, but he would not ask his mother to take the book from him.

The small room into which Valia's mother had taken him was untidy and hot; in a corner near the large bed stood a little curtained bed such as Valia had not slept in for a long, long time.

"You are frozen! Well, wait, we shall soon have some tea! Well, now you are with your mama. Are you glad?" his mother asked with the hard, unpleasant look of one who has been forced to smile beneath blows all her life long.

"No," Valia replied shyly, frightened at his own frankness.

"No? And I had bought some toys for you. Just look, there they are on the window.

Valia approached the window and examined the toys. They were wretched paper horses with straight, thick legs, Punch with a red cap on, with an idiotically grinning face and a large nose, and little tin soldiers with one foot raised in the air.

Valia had long ago given up playing with toys and did not like them, but from politeness he did not show it to his mother. "Yes, they are nice toys," he said.

She noticed the glance he threw at the window, and said with that unpleasant, ingratiating smile:

"I did not know what you liked, darling, and I bought them for you a long time ago."

Valia was silent, not knowing what to reply.

"You must know that I am all alone, Valia, all alone in the wide world; I have no one whose advice I could ask; I thought they would please you." Valia was silent.

Suddenly the muscles of the woman's face relaxed and the tears began to drop from her eyes, quickly, quickly, one after the other; and she threw herself on the bed which gave a pitiful squeak under the weight of her body, and with one hand pressed to her breast, the other to her temples, she looked vacantly through the wall with her pale, faded eyes, and whispered:

"He was not pleased! Not pleased!—"

Valia promptly approached the bed, put his little hand, still red with the cold, on the head of his mother, and spoke with the same serious staidness which distinguished this boy's speech:

"Do not cry, mama. I will love you very much. I do not care to play with toys, but I will love you ever so much. If you wish, I will read to you the story of the poor water-nymph."

THE LOST CHILD

BY FRANÇOIS ÉDOUARD JOACHIM COPPÉE

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ON that morning, which was the morning before Christmas, two important events happened simultaneously—the sun rose, and so did M. Jean-Baptiste Godefroy.

Unquestionably the sun, illuminating suddenly the whole of Paris with its morning rays, is an old friend regarded with affection by everybody. It is particularly welcome after a fortnight of misty atmosphere and gray skies, when the wind has cleared the air and allowed the sun's rays to reach the earth again. Besides all of which the sun is a person of importance. Formerly, he was regarded as a god, and was called Osiris, Apollyon, and I don't know what else. But do not imagine that because the sun is so important he is of greater influence than M. Jean-Baptiste Godefroy, millionaire banker, director of the *Comptoir Général de Crédit,* administrator of several big companies, deputy and member of the General Counsel of the Eure, officer of the Legion of Honor, etc., etc. And whatever opinion the sun may have about himself, he certainly has not a higher opinion than M. Jean-Baptiste

Godefroy has of *him*self. So we are authorized to state, and we consider ourselves justified in stating, that on the morning in question, at about a quarter to eight, the sun and M. Jean-Baptiste Godefroy rose.

Certainly the manner of rising of these two great powers mentioned was not the same. The good old sun began by doing a great many pretty actions. As the sleet had, during the night, covered the bare branches of the trees in the boulevard Malesherbes, where the *hôtel* Godefroy is situated, with a powdered coating, the great magician sun amused himself by transforming the branches into great bouquets of red coral. At the same time he scattered his rays impartially on those poor passers-by whom necessity sent out, so early in the morning, to gain their daily bread. He even had a smile for the poor clerk, who, in a thin overcoat, was hurrying to his office, as well as for the *grisette,* shivering under her thin, insufficient clothing; for the workman carrying half a loaf under his arm, for the car-conductor as he punched the tickets, and for the dealer in roast chestnuts, who was roasting his first panful. In short, the sun gave pleasure to everybody in the world. M. Jean-Baptiste Godefroy, on the contrary, rose in quite a different frame of mind. On the previous evening he had dined with the Minister for Agriculture. The dinner, from the removal of the *potage* to the salad, bristled with truffles, and the banker's stomach, aged forty-

seven years, experienced the burning and biting of pyrosis. So the manner in which M. Jean-Baptiste Godefroy rang for his valet-de-chambre was so expressive that, as he got some warm water for his master's shaving, Charles said to the kitchen-maid:

"There he goes! The monkey is barbarously ill-tempered again this morning. My poor Gertrude, we're going to have a miserable day."

Whereupon, walking on tiptoe, with eyes modestly cast down, he entered the chamber of his master, opened the curtains, lit the fire, and made all the necessary preparations for the toilet with the discreet demeanor and respectful gestures of a sacristan placing the sacred vessels on the altar for the priest.

"What sort of weather this morning?" demanded M. Godefroy curtly, as he buttoned his undervest of gray swandown upon a stomach that was already a little too prominent.

"Very cold, sir," replied Charles meekly. "At six o'clock the thermometer marked seven degrees above zero. But, as you will see, sir, the sky is quite clear, and I think we are going to have a fine morning."

In stropping his razor, M. Godefroy approached the window, drew aside one of the hangings, looked on the boulevard, which was bathed in brightness, and made a slight grimace which bore some resemblance to a smile.

It is all very well to be perfectly stiff and cor-

rect, and to know that it is bad taste to show feeling of any kind in the presence of domestics, but the appearance of the roguish sun in the middle of December sends such a glow of warmth to the heart that it is impossible to disguise the fact. So M. Godefroy deigned, as before observed, to smile. If some one had whispered to the opulent banker that his smile had anything in common with that of the printer's boy, who was enjoying himself by making a slide on the pavement, M. Godefroy would have been highly incensed. But it really was so all the same; and during the space of one minute this man who was so occupied by business matters, this leading light in the financial and political worlds, indulged in the childish pastime of watching the passers-by, and following with his eyes the files of conveyances as they gaily rolled in the sunshine.

But pray do not be alarmed. Such a weakness could not last long. People of no account, and those who have nothing to do, may be able to let their time slip by in doing nothing. It is very well for women, children, poets, and riffraff. M. Godefroy had other fish to fry; and the work of the day which was commencing promised to be exceptionally heavy. From half-past eight to ten o'clock he had a meeting at his office with a certain number of gentlemen, all of whom bore a striking resemblance to M. Godefroy. Like him, they were very nervous; they had risen with the sun, they were all *blasés,* and they all had the

same object in view—to gain money. After breakfast (which he took after the meeting), M. Godefroy had to leap into his carriage and rush to the Bourse, to exchange a few words with other gentlemen who had also risen at dawn, but who had not the least spark of imagination among them. (The conversations were always on the same subject—money.) From there, without losing an instant, M. Godefroy went to preside over another meeting of acquaintances entirely void of compassion and tenderness. The meeting was held round a baize-covered table, which was strewn with heaps of papers and well provided with ink-wells. The conversation again turned on money, and various methods of gaining it. After the aforesaid meeting he, in his capacity of deputy, had to appear before several commissions (always held in rooms where there were baize-covered tables and ink-wells and heaps of papers). There he found men as devoid of sentiment as he was, all utterly incapable of neglecting any occasion of gaining money, but who, nevertheless, had the extreme goodness to sacrifice several hours of the afternoon to the glory of France.

After having quickly shaved he donned a morning suit, the elegant cut and finish of which showed that the old beau of nearly fifty had not ceased trying to please. When he shaved he spared the narrow strip of pepper-and-salt beard round his chin, as it gave him the air of a trust-

worthy family man in the eyes of the Arrogants and of fools in general. Then he descended to his cabinet, where he received the file of men who were entirely occupied by one thought—that of augmenting their capital. These gentlemen discussed several projected enterprises, all of them of considerable importance, notably that of a new railroad to be laid across a wild desert. Another scheme was for the founding of monster works in the environs of Paris, another of a mine to be worked in one of the South American republics. It goes without saying that no one asked if the railway would have passengers or goods to carry, or if the proposed works should manufacture cotton nightcaps or distil whisky; whether the mine was to be of virgin gold or of second-rate copper: certainly not. The conversation of M. Godefroy's morning callers turned exclusively upon the profits which it would be possible to realize during the week which should follow the issue of the shares. They discussed particularly the values of the shares, which they knew would be destined before long to be worth less than the paper on which they were printed in fine style.

These conversations, bristling with figures, lasted till ten o'clock precisely, and then the director of the *Comptoir Général de Crédit,* who, by the way, was an honest man—at least, as honest as is to be found in business—courteously conducted his last visitor to the head of the stairway. The visitor named was an old villain, as

rich as Crœsus, who, by a not uncommon chance, enjoyed the general esteem of the public; whereas, had justice been done to him, he would have been lodging at the expense of the State in one of those large establishments provided by a thoughtful government for smaller delinquents; and there he would have pursued a useful and healthy calling for a lengthy period, the exact length having been fixed by the judges of the supreme court. But M. Godefroy showed him out relentlessly, notwithstanding his importance —it was absolutely necessary to be at the Bourse at 11 o'clock—and went into the dining-room.

It was a luxuriously furnished room. The furniture and plate would have served to endow a cathedral. Nevertheless, notwithstanding that M. Godefroy took a gulp of bicarbonate of soda, his indigestion refused to subside, consequently the banker could only take the scantiest breakfast—that of a dyspeptic. In the midst of such luxury, and under the eye of a well-paid butler, M. Godefroy could only eat a couple of boiled eggs and nibble a little mutton chop. The man of money trifled with dessert—took only a crumb of Roquefort—not more than two cents' worth. Then the door opened and an overdressed but charming little child—young Raoul, four years old—the son of the company director, entered the room, accompanied by his German nursery governess.

This event occurred every day at the same hour

—a quarter to eleven, precisely, while the carriage which was to take the banker to the Bourse was awaiting the gentleman who had only a quarter of an hour to give to paternal sentiment. It was not that he did not love his son. He did love him—nay, he adored him, in his own particular way. But then, you know, business *is* business.

At the age of forty-two, when already worldly-wise and *blasé,* he had fancied himself in love with the daughter of one of his club friends—Marquis de Neufontaine, an old rascal—a nobleman, but one whose card-playing was more than open to suspicion, and who would have been expelled from the club more than once but for the influence of M. Godefroy. The nobleman was only too happy to become the father-in-law of a man who would pay his debts, and without any scruples he handed over his daughter—a simple and ingenuous child of seventeen, who was taken from a convent to be married—to the worldly banker. The girl was certainly sweet and pretty, but she had no dowry except numerous aristocratic prejudices and romantic illusions, and her father thought he was fortunate in getting rid of her on such favorable terms. M. Godefroy, who was the son of an avowed old miser of Andelys, had always remained a man of the people, and intensely vulgar. In spite of his improved circumstances, he had not improved. His entire lack of tact and refinement was painful to his young wife, whose tenderest feelings he ruth-

lessly and thoughtlessly trampled upon. Things were looking unpromising, when, happily for her, Madame Godefroy died in giving birth to her firstborn. When he spoke of his deceased wife, the banker waxed poetical, although had she lived they would have been divorced in six months. His son he loved dearly for several reasons—first, because the child was an only son; secondly, because he was a scion of two such houses as Godefroy and Neufontaine; finally, because the man of money had naturally great respect for the heir to many millions. So the youngster had golden rattles and other similar toys, and was brought up like a young Dauphin. But his father, overwhelmed with business worries, could never give the child more than fifteen minutes per day of his precious time—and, as on the day mentioned, it was always during "cheese"—and for the rest of the day the father abandoned the child to the care of the servants.

"Good morning, Raoul."

"Good morning, papa."

And the company director, having put his serviette away, sat young Raoul on his left knee, took the child's head between his big paws, and in stroking and kissing it actually forgot all his money matters and even his note of the afternoon, which was of great importance to him, as by it he could gain quite an important amount of patronage.

"Papa," said little Raoul suddenly, "will

Father Christmas put anything in my shoe to-night?"

The father answered with "Yes, if you are a good child." This was very striking from a man who was a pronounced freethinker, who always applauded every anti-clerical attack in the Chamber with a vigorous "Hear, hear." He made a mental note that he must buy some toys for his child that very afternoon.

Then he turned to the nursery governess with:

"Are you quite satisfied with Raoul, Mademoiselle Bertha?"

Mademoiselle Bertha became as red as a peony at being addressed, as if the question were scarcely *comme il faut,* and replied by a little imbecile snigger, which seemed fully to satisfy M. Godefroy's curiosity about his son's conduct.

"It's fine to-day," said the financier, "but cold. If you take Raoul to Monceau Park, mademoiselle, please be careful to wrap him up well."

Mademoiselle, by a second fit of idiotic smiling, having set at rest M. Godefroy's doubts and fears on that essential point, he kissed his child, left the room hastily, and in the hall was enveloped in his fur coat by Charles, who also closed the carriage door. Then the faithful fellow went off to the café which he frequented, Rue de Miromesnil, where he had promised to meet the coachman of the baroness who lived opposite, to play a game of billiards, thirty up—and spot-barred, of course.

THE LOST CHILD

Thanks to the brown bay—for which a thousand francs over and above its value was paid by M. Godefroy as a result of a sumptuous snail supper given to that gentleman's coachman by the horse-dealer—thanks to the expensive brown bay which certainly went well, the financier was able to get through his many engagements satisfactorily. He appeared punctually at the Bourse, sat at several committee tables, and at a quarter to five, by voting with the ministry, he helped to reassure France and Europe that the rumors of a ministerial crisis had been totally unfounded. He voted with the ministry because he had succeeded in obtaining the favors which he demanded as the price of his vote.

After he had thus nobly fulfilled his duty to himself and his country, M. Godefroy remembered what he had said to his child on the subject of Father Christmas, and gave his coachman the address of a dealer in toys. There he bought, and had put in his carriage, a fantastic rocking-horse, mounted on casters—a whip in each ear; a box of leaden soldiers—all as exactly alike as those grenadiers of the Russian regiment of the time of Paul I, who all had black hair and snub noses; and a score of other toys, all equally striking and costly. Then, as he returned home, softly reposing in his well-swung carriage, the rich banker, who, after all, was a father, began to think with pride of his little boy and to form plans for his future.

When the child grew up he should have an education worthy of a prince, and he would be one, too, for there was no longer any aristocracy except that of money, and his boy would have a capital of about 80,000,000 francs.

If his father, a pettifogging provincial lawyer, who had formerly dined in the Latin Quarter when in Paris, who had remarked every evening when putting on a white tie that he looked as fine as if he were going to a wedding—if he had been able to accumulate an enormous fortune, and to become thereby a power in the republic; if he had been able to obtain in marriage a young lady, one of whose ancestors had fallen at Marignano, what an important personage little Raoul might become. M. Godefroy built all sorts of air-castles for his boy, forgetting that Christmas is the birthday of a very poor little child, son of a couple of vagrants, born in a stable, where the parents only found lodging through charity.

In the midst of the banker's dreams the coachman cried: "Door, please," and drove into the yard. As he went up the steps M. Godefroy was thinking that he had barely time to dress for dinner; but on entering the vestibule he found all the domestics crowded in front of him in a state of alarm and confusion. In a corner, crouching on a seat, was the German nursery-governess, crying. When she saw the banker she buried her face in her hands and wept still more copiously

than before. M. Godefroy felt that some misfortune had happened.

"What's the meaning of all this? What's amiss? What has happened?"

Charles, the *valet de chambre,* a sneaking rascal of the worst type, looked at his master with eyes full of pity and stammered: "Mr. Raoul—"

"My boy?"

"Lost, sir. The stupid German did it. Since four o'clock this afternoon he has not been seen."

The father staggered back like one who had been hit by a ball. The German threw herself at his feet, screaming: "Mercy, mercy!" and the domestics all spoke at the same time.

Bertha didn't go to *parc Monceau.* She lost the child over there on the fortifications. We have sought him all over, sir. We went to the office for you, sir, and then to the Chamber, but you had just left. Just imagine, the German had a rendezvous with her lover every day, beyond the ramparts, near the gate of Asnières. What a shame! It is a place full of low gipsies and strolling players. Perhaps the child has been stolen. Yes, sir, we informed the police at once. How could we imagine such a thing? A hypocrite, that German! She had a rendezvous, doubtless, with a countryman—a Prussian spy, sure enough!"

His son lost! M. Godefroy seemed to have a torrent of blood rushing through his head. He

sprang at Mademoiselle, seized her by the arms and shook her furiously.

"Where did you lose him, you miserable girl? Tell me the truth before I shake you to pieces. Do you hear? Do you hear?"

But the unfortunate girl could only cry and beg for mercy.

The banker tried to be calm. No, it was impossible. Nobody would dare to steal *his* boy. Somebody would find him and bring him back. Of that there could be no doubt. He could scatter money about right and left, and could have the entire police force at his orders. And he would set to work at once, for not an instant should be lost.

"Charles, don't let the horses be taken out. You others, see that this girl doesn't escape. I'm going to the Prefecture."

And M. Godefroy, with his heart thumping against his sides as if it would break them, his hair wild with fright, darted into his carriage, which at once rolled off as fast as the horses could take it. What irony! The carriage was full of glittering playthings, which sparkled every time a gaslight shone on them. For the next day was the birthday of the divine Infant at whose cradle wise men and simple shepherds alike adored.

"My poor little Raoul! Poor darling! Where is my boy?" repeated the father as in his anguish he dug his nails into the cushions of the carriage.

At that moment all his titles and decorations, his honors, his millions, were valueless to him. He had one single idea burning in his brain. "My poor child! Where is my child?"

At last he reached the Prefecture of Police. But no one was there—the office had been deserted for some time.

"I am M. Godefroy, deputy from L'Eure—My little boy is lost in Paris; a child of four years. I must see the Prefect." He slipped a louis into the hand of the *concièrge*.

The good old soul, a veteran with a gray mustache, less for the sake of the money than out of compassion for the poor father, led him to the Prefect's private apartments. M. Godefroy was finally ushered into the room of the man in whom were centred all his hopes. He was in evening dress, and wore a monocle; his manner was frigid and rather pretentious. The distressed father, whose knees trembled through emotion, sank into an armchair, and, bursting into tears, told of the loss of his boy—told the story stammeringly and with many breaks, for his voice was choked by sobs.

The Prefect, who was also father of a family, was inwardly moved at the sight of his visitor's grief, but he repressed his emotion and assumed a cold and self-important air.

"You say, sir, that your child has been missing since four o'clock?"

"Yes."

"Just when night was falling, confound it. He isn't at all precocious, speaks very little, doesn't know where he lives, and can't even pronounce his own name?"

"Unfortunately that is so."

"Not far from Asnières gate? A suspected quarter. But cheer up. We have a very intelligent *Commissaire de Police* there. I'll telephone to him."

. . . .

The distressed father was left alone for five minutes. How his temples throbbed and his heart beat!

Then, suddenly, the Prefect reappeared, smiling with satisfaction. "Found!"

Whereupon M. Godefroy rushed to the Prefect, whose hand he pressed till that functionary winced with the pain.

"I must acknowledge that we were exceedingly fortunate. The little chap is blond, isn't he? Rather pale? In blue velvet? Black felt hat, with a white feather in it?"

"Yes, yes; that's he. That's my little Raoul."

"Well, he's at the house of a poor fellow down in that quarter who had just been at the police office to make his declaration to the Commissaire. Here's his address, which I took down: '*Pierron, rue des Cailloux, Levallois-Perret.*' With good horses you may reach your boy in less than an hour. Certainly, you won't find him in an aristocratic quarter; his surroundings won't be of the

highest. The man who found him is only a small dealer in vegetables."

But that was of no importance to M. Godefroy, who, having expressed his gratitude to the Prefect, leaped down the stairs four at a time, and sprang into his carriage. At that moment he realized how devotedly he loved his child. As he drove away he no longer thought of little Raoul's princely education and magnificent inheritance. He was decided never again to hand over the child entirely to the hands of servants, and he also made up his mind to devote less time to monetary matters and the glory of France and attend more to his own. The thought also occurred to him that France wouldn't be likely to suffer from the neglect. He had hitherto been ashamed to recognize the existence of an old-maid sister of his father, but he decided to send for her to his house. She would certainly shock his lackeys by her primitive manners and ideas. But what of that? She would take care of his boy, which to him was of much more importance than the good opinion of his servants. The financier, who was always in a hurry, never felt so eager to arrive punctually at a committee meeting as he was to reach the lost little one. For the first time in his life he was longing through pure affection to take the child in his arms.

The carriage rolled rapidly along in the clear, crisp night air down boulevard Malesherbes; and, having crossed the ramparts and passed the large

houses, plunged into the quiet solitude of suburban streets. When the carriage stopped M. Godefroy saw a wretched hovel, on which was the number he was seeking; it was the house where Pierron lived. The door of the house opened immediately, and a big, rough-looking fellow with red mustache appeared. One of his sleeves was empty. Seeing the gentleman in the carriage, Pierron said cheerily: "So you are the little one's father. Don't be afraid. The little darling is quite safe," and, stepping aside in order to allow M. Godefroy to pass, he placed his finger on his lips with: "Hush! The little one is asleep!"

Yes, it was a real hovel. By the dim light of a little oil lamp M. Godefroy could just distinguish a dresser from which a drawer was missing, some broken chairs, a round table on which stood a beer-mug which was half empty, three glasses, some cold meat on a plate, and on the bare plaster of the wall two gaudy pictures—a bird's-eye view of the Exposition of 1889, with the Eiffel Tower in bright blue, and the portrait of General Boulanger when a handsome young lieutenant. This last evidence of weakness of the tenant of the house may well be excused, since it was shared by nearly everybody in France. The man took the lamp and went on tiptoe to the corner of the room where, on a clean bed, two little fellows were fast asleep. In the little one, around whom the other had thrown a protecting arm, M. Godefroy recognized his son.

"The youngsters were tired to death, and so sleepy," said Pierron, trying to soften his rough voice. "I had no idea when you would come, so gave them some supper and put them to bed, and then I went to make a declaration at the police office. Zidore generally sleeps up in the garret, but I thought they would be better here, and that I should be better able to watch them."

M. Godefroy, however, scarcely heard the explanation. Strangely moved, he looked at the two sleeping infants on an iron bedstead and covered with an old blanket which had once been used either in barracks or hospital. Little Raoul, who was still in his velvet suit, looked so frail and delicate compared with his companion that the banker almost envied the latter his brown complexion.

"Is he your boy?" he asked Pierron.

"No," answered he. "I am a bachelor, and don't suppose I shall ever marry, because of my accident. You see, a dray passed over my arm—that was all. Two years ago a neighbor of mine died, when that child was only five years old. The poor mother really died of starvation. She wove wreaths for the cemeteries, but could make nothing worth mentioning at that trade—not enough to live. However, she worked for the child for five years, and then the neighbors had to buy wreaths for her. So I took care of the youngster. Oh, it was nothing much, and I was soon repaid. He is seven years old, and is a sharp little fellow,

so he helps me a great deal. On Sundays and Thursdays, and the other days after school, he helps me push my handcart. Zidore is a smart little chap. It was he who found your boy."

"What!" exclaimed M. Godefroy—"that child!"

"Oh, he's quite a little man, I assure you. When he left school he found your child, who was walking on ahead, crying like a fountain. He spoke to him and comforted him, like an old grandfather. The difficulty is, that one can't easily understand what your little one says—English words are mixed up with German and French. So we couldn't get much out of him, nor could we learn his address. Zidore brought him to me—I wasn't far away; and then all the old women in the place came round chattering and croaking like so many frogs, and all full of advice.

" 'Take him to the police,' " said some.

But Zidore protested.

"That would scare him," said he, for like all Parisians, he has no particular liking for the police—"and besides, your little one didn't wish to leave him. So I came back here with the child as soon as I could. They had supper, and then off to bed. Don't they look sweet?"

When he was in his carriage, M. Godefroy had decided to reward the finder of his child handsomely—to give him a handful of that gold so easily gained. Since entering the house he had

seen a side of human nature with which he was formerly unacquainted—the brave charity of the poor in their misery. The courage of the poor girl who had worked herself to death weaving wreaths to keep her child; the generosity of the poor cripple in adopting the orphan, and above all, the intelligent goodness of the little street Arab in protecting the child who was still smaller than himself—all this touched M. Godefroy deeply and set him reflecting. For the thought had occurred to him that there were other cripples who needed to be looked after as well as Pierron, and other orphans as well as Zidore. He also debated whether it would not be better to employ his time looking after them, and whether money might not be put to a better use than merely gaining money. Such was his reverie as he stood looking at the two sleeping children. Finally, he turned round to study the features of the greengrocer, and was charmed by the loyal expression in the face of the man, and his clear, truthful eyes.

"My friend," said M. Godefroy, "you and your adopted son have rendered me an immense service. I shall soon prove to you that I am not ungrateful. But, for to-day—I see that you are not in comfortable circumstances, and I should like to leave a small proof of my thankfulness."

But the hand of the cripple arrested that of the banker, which was diving into his coat-pocket where he kept bank-notes.

"No, sir; no! Anybody else should have done just as we have done. I will not accept any recompense; but pray don't take offense. Certainly, I am not rolling in wealth, but please excuse my pride—that of an old soldier; I have the Tonquin medal—and I don't wish to eat food which I haven't earned."

"As you like," said the financier; "but an old soldier like you is capable of something better. You are too good to push a handcart. I will make some arrangement for you, never fear."

The cripple responded by a quiet smile, and said coldly: "Well, sir, if you really wish to do something for me—"

"You'll let me care for Zidore, won't you?" cried M. Godefroy, eagerly.

"That I will, with the greatest of pleasure," responded Pierron, joyfully. "I have often thought about the child's future. He is a sharp little fellow. His teachers are delighted with him."

Then Pierron suddenly stopped, and an expression came over his face which M. Godefroy at once interpreted as one of distrust. The thought evidently was: "Oh, when he has once left us he'll forget us entirely."

"You can safely pick the child up in your arms and take him to the carriage. He'll be better at home than here, of course. Oh, you needn't be afraid of disturbing him. He is fast asleep, and

you can just pick him up. He must have his shoes on first, though."

Following Pierron's glance M. Godefroy perceived on the hearth, where a scanty coke fire was dying out, two pairs of children's shoes—the elegant ones of Raoul, and the rough ones of Zidore. Each pair contained a little toy and a package of bonbons.

"Don't think about that," said Pierron in an abashed tone. "Zidore put the shoes there. You know children still believe in Christmas and the child Jesus, whatever scholars may say about fables; so, as I came back from the *commissaire,* as I didn't know whether your boy would have to stay here to-night, I got those things for them both."

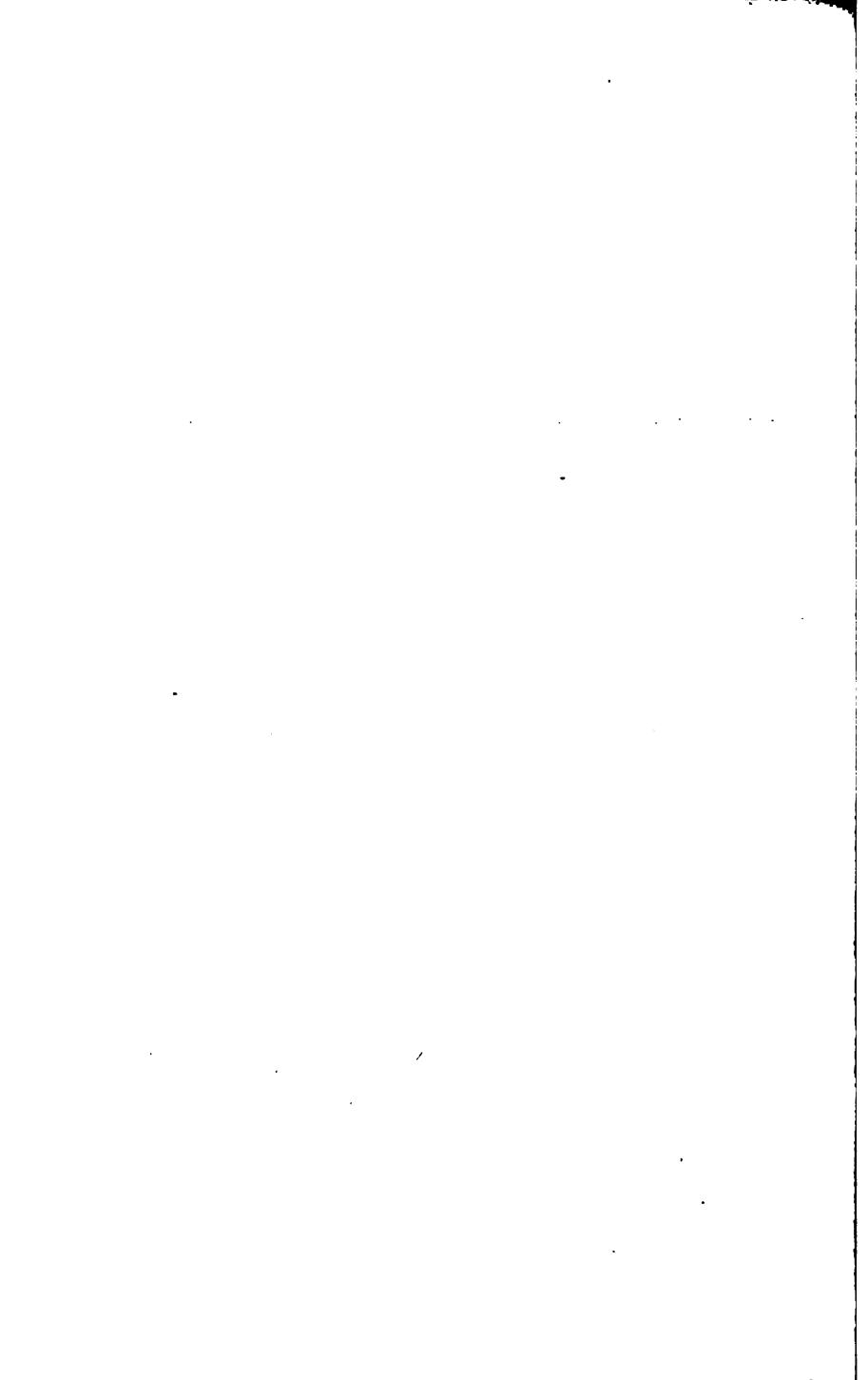
At which the eyes of M. Godefroy, the freethinker, the hardened capitalist, and *blasé* man of the world, filled with tears.

He rushed out of the house, but returned in a minute with his arms full of the superb mechanical horse, the box of leaden soldiers, and the rest of the costly playthings bought by him in the afternoon, and which had not even been taken out of the carriage.

"My friend, my dear friend," said he to the greengrocer, "see, these are the presents which Christmas has brought to my little Raoul. I want him to find them here, when he awakens, and to share them with Zidore, who will henceforth be his playmate and friend. You'll trust me now,

won't you? I'll take care both of Zidore and of you, and then I shall ever remain in your debt, for not only have you found my boy, but you have also reminded me, who am rich and lived only for myself, that there are other poor who need to be looked after. I swear by these two sleeping children, I won't forget them any longer."

Such is the miracle which happened on the 24th of December of last year, ladies and gentlemen, at Paris, in the full flow of modern egotism. It doesn't sound likely—that I own; and I am compelled to attribute this miraculous event to the influence of the Divine Child who came down to earth nearly nineteen centuries ago to command men to love one another.

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING

BY RUDYARD KIPLING

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING

BY RUDYARD KIPLING

"Brother to a Prince and fellow to a beggar if he be found worthy."

THE law, as quoted, lays down a fair conduct of life, and one not easy to follow. I have been fellow to a beggar again and again under circumstances which prevented either of us finding out whether the other was worthy. I have still to be brother to a Prince, though I once came near to kinship with what might have been a veritable King and was promised the reversion of a Kingdom—army, law-courts, revenue and policy all complete. But, to-day, I greatly fear that my King is dead, and if I want a crown I must go and hunt it for myself.

The beginning of everything was in a railway train upon the road to Mhow from Ajmir. There had been a Deficit in the Budget, which necessitated traveling, not Second-class, which is only half as dear as First-class, but by Intermediate, which is very awful indeed. There are no cushions in the Intermediate class, and the population are either Intermediate, which is Eurasian, or native, which for a long night jour-

ney is nasty, or Loafer, which is amusing though intoxicated. Intermediates do not patronize refreshment-rooms. They carry their food in bundles and pots, and buy sweets from the native sweetmeat-sellers, and drink the roadside water. That is why in the hot weather Intermediates are taken out of the carriages dead, and in all weathers are most properly looked down upon.

My particular Intermediate happened to be empty till I reached Nasirabad, when a huge gentleman in shirt-sleeves entered, and, following the custom of Intermediates, passed the time of day. He was a wanderer and a vagabond like myself, but with an educated taste for whiskey. He told tales of things he had seen and done, of out-of-the-way corners of the Empire into which he had penetrated, and of adventures in which he risked his life for a few days' food. "If India was filled with men like you and me, not knowing more than the crows where they'd get their next day's rations, it isn't seventy millions of revenue the land would be paying—it's seven hundred millions," said he; and as I looked at his mouth and chin I was disposed to agree with him. We talked politics—the politics of Loaferdom that sees thing from the underside where the lath and plaster is not smoothed off—and we talked postal arrangements because my friend wanted to send a telegram back from the next station to Ajmir, which is the turning-off place from the Bombay to the Mhow line as you travel

westward. My friend had no money beyond eight annas which he wanted for dinner, and I had no money at all, owing to the hitch in the Budget before mentioned. Further, I was going into a wilderness where, though I should resume touch with the Treasury, there were no telegraph offices. I was, therefore, unable to help him in any way.

"We might threaten a Station-master, and make him send a wire on tick," said my friend, "but that'd mean inquiries for you and for me, and I've got my hands full these days. Did you say you are traveling back along this line within any days?"

"Within ten," I said.

"Can't you make it eight?" said he. "Mine is rather urgent business."

"I can send your telegram within ten days if that will serve you," I said.

"I couldn't trust the wire to fetch him now I think of it. It's this way. He leaves Delhi on the 23d for Bombay. That means he'll be running through Ajmir about the night of the 23d."

"But I'm going into the Indian Desert," I explained.

"Well *and* good," said he. "You'll be changing at Marwar Junction to get into Jodhpore territory—you must do that—and he'll be coming through Marwar Junction in the early morning of the 24th by the Bombay Mail. Can you be at Marwar Junction on that time?

'Twon't be inconveniencing you because I know that there's precious few pickings to be got out of these Central India States—even though you pretend to be correspondent of the *Backwoodsman*."

"Have you ever tried that trick?" I asked.

"Again and again, but the Residents find you out, and then you get escorted to the Border before you've time to get your knife into them. But about my friend here. I *must* give him a word o' mouth to tell him what's come to me or else he won't know where to go. I would take it more than kind of you if you was to come out of Central India in time to catch him at Marwar Junction, and say to him:—'He has gone South for the week.' He'll know what that means. He's a big man with a red beard, and a great swell he is. You'll find him sleeping like a gentleman with all his luggage round him in a Second-class compartment. But don't you be afraid. Slip down the window, and say:—'He has gone South for the week,' and he'll tumble. It's only cutting your time of stay in those parts by two days. I ask you as a stranger—going to the West," he said, with emphasis.

"Where have *you* come from?" said I.

"From the East," said he, "and I am hoping that you will give him the message on the Square —for the sake of my Mother as well as your own."

Englishmen are not usually softened by ap-

peals to the memory of their mothers, but for certain reasons, which will be fully apparent, I saw fit to agree.

"It's more than a little matter," said he, "and that's why I ask you to do it—and now I know that I can depend on you doing it. A Second-class carriage at Marwar Junction, and a red-haired man asleep in it. You'll be sure to remember. I get out at the next station, and I must hold on there till he comes or sends me what I want."

"I'll give the message if I catch him," I said, "and for the sake of your Mother as well as mine I'll give you a word of advice. Don't try to run Central India States just now as the correspondent of the *Backwoodsman*. There's a real one knocking about here, and it might lead to trouble."

"Thank you," said he, simply, "and when will the swine be gone? I can't starve because he's ruining my work. I wanted to get hold of the Degumber Rajah down here about his father's widow, and give him a jump."

"What did he do to his father's widow, then?"

"Filled her up with red pepper and slippered her to death as she hung from a beam. I found that out myself, and I'm the only man that would dare going into the State to get hush-money for it. They'll try to poison me, same as they did in Chortumna when I went on the loot

there. But you'll give the man at Marwar Junction my message?"

He got out at a little roadside station, and I reflected. I had heard, more than once, of men personating correspondents of newspapers and bleeding small Native States with threats of exposure, but I had never met any of the caste before. They lead a hard life, and generally die with great suddenness. The Native States have a wholesome horror of English newspapers, which may throw a light on their peculiar methods of government, and do their best to choke correspondents with champagne, or drive them out of their mind with four-in-hand barouches. They do not understand that nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of Native States so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits, and the ruler is not drugged, drunk, or diseased from one end of the year to the other. Native States were created by Providence in order to supply picturesque scenery, tigers, and tall-writing. They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Raschid. When I left the train I did business with divers Kings, and in eight days passed through many changes of life. Sometimes I wore dress-clothes and consorted with Princes and Politicals, drinking from crystal and eating from silver. Sometimes I lay out upon the

ground and devoured what I could get, from a plate made of a flapjack, and drank the running water, and slept under the same rug as my servant. It was all in the day's work.

Then I headed for the Great Indian Desert upon the proper date, as I had promised, and the night Mail set me down at Marwar Junction, where a funny little, happy-go-lucky, native-managed railway runs to Jodhpore. The Bombay Mail from Delhi makes a short halt at Marwar. She arrived as I got in, and I had just time to hurry to her platform and go down the carriages. There was only one Second-class on the train. I slipped the window, and looked down upon a flaming red beard, half covered by a railway rug. That was my man, fast asleep, and I dug him gently in the ribs. He woke with a grunt, and I saw his face in the light of the lamps. It was a great and shining face.

"Tickets again?" said he.

"No," said I. "I am to tell you that he is gone South for the week. He is gone South for the week!"

The train had begun to move out. The red man rubbed his eyes. "He has gone South for the week," he repeated. "Now that's just like his impidence. Did he say that I was to give you anything?—'Cause I won't."

"He didn't," I said, and dropped away, and watched the red lights die out in the dark. It was horribly cold, because the wind was blow-

ing off the sands. I climbed into my own train —not an Intermediate Carriage this time—and went to sleep.

If the man with the beard had given me a rupee I should have kept it as a memento of a rather curious affair. But the consciousness of having done my duty was my only reward.

Later on I reflected that two gentlemen like my friends could not do any good if they foregathered and personated correspondents of newspapers, and might, if they "stuck up" one of the little rat-trap states of Central India or Southern Rajputana, get themselves into serious difficulties. I therefore took some trouble to describe them as accurately as I could remember to people who would be interested in deporting them; and succeeded, so I was later informed, in having them headed back from Degumber borders.

Then I became respectable, and returned to an Office where there were no Kings and no incidents except the daily manufacture of a newspaper. A newspaper office seems to attract every conceivable sort of person, to the prejudice of discipline. Zenana-mission ladies arrive, and beg that the Editor will instantly abandon all his duties to describe a Christian prize-giving in a back-slum of a perfectly inaccessible village; Colonels who have been over-passed for commands sit down and sketch the outline of a series of ten, twelve, or twenty-four leading articles on

Seniority *versus* Selection; missionaries wish to know why they have not been permitted to escape from their regular vehicles of abuse and swear at a brother missionary under special patronage of the editorial We; stranded theatrical companies troop up to explain that they cannot pay for their advertisements, but on their return from New Zealand or Tahiti will do so with interest; inventors of patent punkah-pulling machines, carriage couplings and unbreakable swords and axle-trees call with specifications in their pockets and hours at their disposal; tea-companies enter and elaborate their prospectuses with the office pens; secretaries of ball-committees clamor to have the glories of their last dance more fully expounded; strange ladies rustle in and say:—"I want a hundred lady's cards printed *at once,* please," which is manifestly part of an Editor's duty; and every dissolute ruffian that ever tramped the Grand Trunk Road makes it his business to ask for employment as a proof-reader. And, all the time, the telephone-bell is ringing madly, and Kings are being killed on the Continent, and Empires are saying—"You're another," and Mister Gladstone is calling down brimstone upon the British Dominions, and the little black copy-boys are whining, *"kaa-pi chay-ha-yeh"* (copy wanted) like tired bees, and most of the paper is as blank as Modred's shield.

But that is the amusing part of the year. There are other six months wherein none ever

come to call, and the thermometer walks inch by inch up to the top of the glass, and the office is darkened to just above reading-light, and the press machines are red-hot of touch, and nobody writes anything but accounts of amusements in the Hill-stations or obituary notices. Then the telephone becomes a tinkling terror, because it tells you of the sudden deaths of men and women that you knew intimately, and the prickly-heat covers you as with a garment, and you sit down and write:—"A slight increase of sickness is reported from the Khuda Janta Khan District. The outbreak is purely sporadic in its nature, and, thanks to the energetic efforts of the District authorities, is now almost at an end. It is, however, with deep regret we record the death, etc."

Then the sickness really breaks out, and the less recording and reporting the better for the peace of the subscribers. But the Empires and the Kings continue to divert themselves as selfishly as before, and the Foreman thinks that a daily paper really ought to come out once in twenty-four hours, and all the people at the Hill-stations in the middle of their amusements say:—"Good gracious! Why can't the paper be sparkling? I'm sure there's plenty going on up here."

That is the dark half of the moon, and, as the advertisements say, "must be experienced to be appreciated."

It was in that season, and a remarkably evil season, that the paper began running the last issue of the week on Saturday night, which is to say, Sunday morning, after the custom of a London paper. This was a great convenience, for immediately after the paper was put to bed, the dawn would lower the thermometer from 96° to almost 84° for half an hour, and in that chill—you have no idea how cold is 84° on the grass until you begin to pray for it—a very tired man could set off to sleep ere the heat roused him.

One Saturday night it was my pleasant duty to put the paper to bed alone. A King or courtier or a courtesan or a community was going to die or get a new Constitution, or do something that was important on the other side of the world, and the paper was to be held open till the latest possible minute in order to catch the telegram. It was a pitchy black night, as stifling as a June night can be, and the *loo,* the red-hot wind from the westward, was booming among the tinder-dry trees and pretending that the rain was on its heels. Now and again a spot of almost boiling water would fall on the dust with the flop of a frog, but all our weary world knew that was only pretence. It was a shade cooler in the press-room than the office, so I sat there, while the type clicked and clicked and the night-jars hooted at the windows, and the all but naked compositors wiped the sweat

from their foreheads and called for water. The thing that was keeping us back, whatever it was, would not come off, though the *loo* dropped and the last type was set, and the whole round earth stood still in the choking heat, with its finger on its lip, to wait the event. I drowsed, and wondered whether the telegraph was a blessing, and whether this dying man, or struggling people, was aware of the inconvenience the delay was causing. There was no special reason beyond the heat and worry to make tension, but, as the clock hands crept up to three o'clock and the machines spun their fly-wheels two and three times to see that all was in order, before I said the word that would set them off, I could have shrieked aloud.

Then the roar and rattle of the wheels shivered the quiet into little bits. I rose to go away, but two men in white clothes stood in front of me. The first one said:—"It's him!" The second said:—"So it is!" And they both laughed almost as loudly as the machinery roared, and mopped their foreheads. "We see there was a light burning across the road and we were sleeping in that ditch there for coolness, and I said to my friend here, 'The office is open. Let's come along and speak to him as turned us back from the Degumber State,'" said the smaller of the two. He was the man I had met in the Mhow train, and his fellow was the red-bearded man of

Marwar Junction. There was no mistaking the eyebrows of the one or the beard of the other.

I was not pleased, because I wished to go to sleep, not to squabble with loafers. "What do you want?" I asked.

"Half an hour's talk with you cool and comfortable, in the office," said the red-bearded man. "We'd *like* some drink—the Contrack doesn't begin yet, Peachey, so you needn't look —but what we really want is advice. We don't want money. We ask you as a favor, because you did us a bad turn about Degumber."

I led from the press-room to the stifling office with the maps on the walls, and the red-haired man rubbed his hands. "That's something like," said he. "This was the proper shop to come to. Now, Sir, let me introduce to you Brother Peachey Carnehan, that's him, and Brother Daniel Dravot, that is *me,* and the less said about our professions the better, for we have been most things in our time. Soldier, sailor, compositor, photographer, proof-reader, street-preacher, and correspondents of the *Backwoodsman* when we thought the paper wanted one. Carnehan is sober, and so am I. Look at us first and see that's sure. It will save you cutting into my talk. We'll take one of your cigars apiece, and you shall see us light."

I watched the test. The men were absolutely sober, so I gave them each a tepid peg.

"Well *and* good," said Carnehan of the eye-

brows, wiping the froth from his moustache. "Let me talk now, Dan. We have been all over India, mostly on foot. We have been boiler-fitters, engine-drivers, petty contractors, and all that, and we have decided that India isn't big enough for such as us."

They certainly were too big for the office. Dravot's beard seemed to fill half the room and Carnehan's shoulders the other half, as they sat on the big table. Carnehan continued: "The country isn't half worked out because they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that without all the Government saying—'Leave it alone and let us govern.' Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. We are not little men, and there is nothing that we are afraid of except Drink, and we have signed a Contrack on that. *Therefore,* we are going away to be Kings."

"Kings in our own right," muttered Dravot.

"Yes, of course," I said. "You've been tramping in the sun, and it's a very warm night, and hadn't you better sleep over the notion? Come to-morrow."

"Neither drunk nor sunstruck," said Dravot. "We have slept over the notion half a year, and require to see Books and Atlases, and we have

decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-*whack*. They call it Kafiristan. By my reckoning it's the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan, not more than three hundred miles from Peshawur. They have two and thirty heathen idols there, and we'll be the thirty-third. It's a mountainous country, and the women of those parts are very beautiful."

"But that is provided against in the Contrack," said Carnehan. "Neither Women nor Liqu-or, Daniel."

"And that's all we know, except that no one has gone there, and they fight, and in any place where they fight, a man who knows how to drill men can always be a King. We shall go to those parts and say to any King we find—'D' you want to vanquish your foes?' and we will show him how to drill men; for that we know better than anything else. Then we will subvert that King and seize his Throne and establish a Dy-nasty."

"You'll be cut to pieces before you're fifty miles across the Border," I said. "You have to travel through Afghanistan to get to that country. It's one mass of mountains and peaks and glaciers, and no Englishman has been through it. The people are utter brutes, and even if you reached them you couldn't do anything."

"That's more like," said Carnehan. "If you

could think us a little more mad we would be more pleased. We have come to you to know about this country, to read a book about it, and to be shown maps. We want you to tell us that we are fools and to show us your books." He turned to the bookcases.

"Are you at all in earnest?" I said.

"A little," said Dravot, sweetly. "As big a map as you have got, even if it's all blank where Kafiristan is, and any books you've got. We can read, though we aren't very educated."

I uncased the big thirty-two-miles-to-the-inch map of India, and two smaller Frontier maps, hauled down volume INF-KAN of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* and the men consulted them.

"See here!" said Dravot, his thumb on the map. "Up to Jagdallak, Peachey and me know the road. We was there with Roberts's Army. We'll have to turn off to the right at Jagdallak through Laghmann territory. Then we get among the hills—fourteen thousand feet—fifteen thousand—it will be cold work there, but it don't look very far on the map."

I handed him Wood on the *Sources of the Oxus.* Carnehan was deep in the *Encyclopaedia.*

"They're a mixed lot," said Dravot, reflectively; "and it won't help us to know the names of their tribes. The more tribes the more they'll fight, and the better for us. From Jagdallak to Ashang. H'mm!"

"But all the information about the country is as sketchy and inaccurate as can be," I protested. "No one knows anything about it really. Here's the file of the *United Services' Institute*. Read what Bellew says."

"Blow Bellew!" said Carnehan. "Dan, they're an all-fired lot of heathens, but this book here says they think they're related to us English."

I smoked while the men pored over *Raverty, Wood,* the maps, and the *Encyclopaedia.*

"There is no use your waiting," said Dravot, politely. "It's about four o'clock now. We'll go before six o'clock if you want to sleep, and we won't steal any of the papers. Don't you sit up. We're two harmless lunatics and if you come, to-morrow evening, down to the Serai we'll say good-bye to you."

"You *are* two fools," I answered. "You'll be turned back at the Frontier or cut up the minute you set foot in Afghanistan. Do you want any money or a recommendation down-country? I can help you to the chance of work next week."

"Next week we shall be hard at work ourselves, thank you," said Dravot. "It isn't so easy being a King as it looks. When we've got our Kingdom in going order we'll let you know, and you can come up and help us to govern it."

"Would two lunatics make a Contrack like that?" said Carnehan, with subdued pride, showing me a greasy half-sheet of note-paper

on which was written the following. I copied it, then and there, as a curiosity:

This Contract between me and you persuing witnesseth in the name of God—Amen and so forth.

(*One*) *That me and you will settle this matter together:* i. e., *to be Kings of Kafiristan.*

(*Two*) *That you and me will not, while this matter is being settled, look at any Liquor, nor any Woman, black, white or brown, so as to get mixed up with one or the other harmful.*

(*Three*) *That we conduct ourselves with dignity and discretion and if one of us gets into trouble the other will stay by him.*

Signed by you and me this day.
Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan.
Daniel Dravot.
Both Gentlemen at Large.

"There was no need for the last article," said Carnehan, blushing modestly; "but it looks regular. Now you knew the sort of men that loafers are—we *are* loafers, Dan, until we get out of India—and *do* you think that we would sign a Contrack like that unless we was in earnest? We have kept away from the two things that make life worth having.'

"You won't enjoy your lives much longer if you are going to try this idiotic adventure. Don't set the office on fire," I said, "and go away before nine o'clock."

I left them still poring over the maps and making notes on the back of the "Contrack." "Be sure to come down to the Serai to-morrow," were their parting words.

The Kumharsen Serai is the great four-square sink of humanity where the strings of camels and

horses from the North load and unload. All the nationalities of Central Asia may be found there, and most of the folk of India proper. Balkh and Bokhara there meet Bengal and Bombay, and try to draw eyeteeth. You can buy ponies, turquoises, Persian pussy-cats, saddle-bags, fat-tailed sheep and mush in the Kumharsen Serai, and get many strange things for nothing. In the afternoon I went down there to see whether my friends intended to keep their word or were lying about drunk.

A priest attired in fragments of ribbons and rags stalked up to me, gravely twisting a child's paper whirligig. Behind was his servant bending under the load of a crate of mud toys. The two were loading up two camels, and the inhabitants of the Serai watched them with shrieks of laughter.

"The priest is mad," said a horse-dealer to me. "He is going up to Kabul to sell toys to the Amir. He will either be raised to honor or have his head cut off. He came in here this morning and has been behaving madly ever since."

"The witless are under the protection of God," stammered a flat-cheeked Usbeg in broken Hindi. "They foretell future events."

"Would they could have foretold that my caravan would have been cut up by the Shinwaris almost within shadow of the Pass!" grunted the Eusufzai agent of a Rajputana

trading-house whose goods had been feloniously diverted into the hands of other robbers just across the Border, and whose misfortunes were the laughing-stock of the bazar. "Ohé, priest, whence come you and whither do you go?"

"From Roum have I come," shouted the priest, waving his whirligig; "from Roum, blown by the breath of a hundred devils across the sea! O thieves, robbers, liars, the blessing of Pir Khan on pigs, dogs, and perjurers! Who will take the Protected of God to the North to sell charms that are never still to the Amir? The camels shall not gall, the sons shall not fall sick, and the wives shall remain faithful while they are away, of the men who give me place in their caravan. Who will assist me to slipper the King of the Roos with a golden slipper with a silver heel? The protection of Pir Khan be upon his labors!" He spread out the skirts of his gaberdine and pirouetted between the lines of tethered horses.

"There starts a caravan from Peshawur to Kabul in twenty days, *Huzrut*," said the Eusufzai trader. "My camels go therewith. Do thou also go and bring us good-luck."

"I will go even now!" shouted the priest. "I will depart upon my winged camels, and be at Peshawur in a day! Ho! Hazar Mir Khan," he yelled to his servant, "drive out the camels, but let me first mount my own."

He leaped on the back of his beast as it knelt, and, turning round to me, cried:—"Come thou

also, Sahib, a little along the road, and I will sell thee a charm—an amulet that shall make thee King of Kafiristan."

Then the light broke upon me, and I followed the two camels out of the Serai till we reached open road and the priest halted.

"What d' you think o' that?" said he in English. "Carnehan can't talk their patter, so I've made him my servant. He makes a handsome servant. 'Tisn't for nothing that I've been knocking about the country for fourteen years. Didn't I do that talk neat? We'll hitch on to a caravan at Peshawur till we get to Jagdallak, and then we'll see if we can get donkeys for our camels, and strike into Kafiristan. Whirligigs for the Amir, O Lor'! Put your hand under the camel-bags and tell me what you feel."

I felt the butt of a Martini, and another and another.

"Twenty of 'em," said Dravot, placidly. "Twenty of 'em, and ammunition to correspond, under the whirligigs and the mud dolls."

"Heaven help you if you are caught with those things!" I said. "A Martini is worth her weight in silver among the Pathans."

"Fifteen hundred rupees of capital—every rupee we could beg, borrow, or steal—are invested on these two camels," said Dravot. "We won't get caught. We're going through the Khaiber with a regular caravan. Who'd touch a poor mad priest?"

"Have you got everything you want?" I asked, overcome with astonishment.

"Not yet, but we shall soon. Give us a memento of your kindness, *Brother*. You did me a service yesterday, and that time in Marwar. Half my Kingdom shall you have, as the saying is." I slipped a small charm compass from my watch-chain and handed it up to the priest.

"Good-bye," said Dravot, giving me his hand cautiously. "It's the last time we'll shake hands with an Englishman these many days. Shake hands with him, Carnehan," he cried, as the second camel passed me.

Carnehan leaned down and shook hands. Then the camels passed away along the dusty road, and I was left alone to wonder. My eye could detect no failure in the disguises. The scene in Serai attested that they were complete to the native mind. There was just the chance, therefore, that Carnehan and Dravot would be able to wander through Afghanistan without detection. But, beyond, they would find death, certain and awful death.

Ten days later a native friend of mine, giving me the news of the day from Peshawur, wound up his letter with:—"There has been much laughter here on account of a certain mad priest who is going in his estimation to sell petty gauds and insignificant trinkets which he ascribes as great charms to H. H. the Amir of Bokhara. He passed through Peshawur and associated

himself to the Second Summer caravan that goes to Kabul. The merchants are pleased, because through superstition they imagine that such mad fellows bring good-fortune."

The two, then, were beyond the Border. I would have prayed for them, but, that night, a real King died in Europe, and demanded an obituary notice.

. . . .

The wheel of the world swings through the same phases again and again. Summer passed and winter thereafter, and came and passed again. The daily paper continued and I with it, and upon the third summer there fell a hot night, a night-issue, and a strained waiting for something to be telegraphed from the other side of the world, exactly as had happened before. A few great men had died in the past two years, the machines worked with more clatter, and some of the trees in the Office garden were a few feet taller. But that was all the difference.

I passed over to the press-room, and went through just such a scene as I have already described. The nervous tension was stronger than it had been two years before, and I felt the heat more acutely. At three o'clock I cried, "Print off," and turned to go, when there crept to my chair what was left of a man. He was bent into a circle, his head was sunk between his shoulders, and he moved his feet one over the other like a bear. I could hardly see whether he walked or

crawled—this rag-wrapped, whining cripple who addressed me by name, crying that he was come back. "Can you give me a drink?" he whimpered. "For the Lord's sake, give me a drink!"

I went back to the office, the man following with groans of pain, and I turned up the lamp.

"Don't you know me?" he gasped, dropping into a chair, and he turned his drawn face, surmounted by a shock of grey hair, to the light.

I looked at him intently. Once before had I seen eyebrows that met over the nose in an inch-broad black band, but for the life of me I could not tell where.

"I don't know you," I said, handing him the whiskey. "What can I do for you?"

He took a gulp of the spirit raw, and shivered in spite of the suffocating heat.

"I've come back," he repeated; "and I was the King of Kafiristan—me and Dravot—crowned Kings we was! In this office we settled it—you setting there and giving us the books. I am Peachey—Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan, and you've been setting here ever since—O Lord!"

I was more than a little astonished, and expressed my feelings accordingly.

"It's true," said Carnehan, with a dry cackle, nursing his feet, which were wrapped in rags. "True as gospel. Kings we were, with crowns upon our heads—me and Dravot—poor Dan—oh, poor, poor Dan, that would never take advice, not though I begged of him!"

"Take the whiskey," I said, "and take your own time. Tell me all you can recollect of everything from beginning to end. You got across the border on your camels, Dravot dressed as a mad priest and you his servant. Do you remember that?"

"I ain't mad—yet, but I shall be that way soon. Of course I remember. Keep looking at me, or maybe my words will go all to pieces. Keep looking at me in my eyes and don't say anything."

I leaned forward and looked into his face as steadily as I could. He dropped one hand upon the table and I grasped it by the wrist. It was twisted like a bird's claw, and upon the back was a ragged, red, diamond-shaped scar.

"No, don't look there. Look at *me,*" said Carnehan.

"That comes afterward, but for the Lord's sake don't distrack me. We left with that caravan, me and Dravot playing all sorts of antics to amuse the people we were with. Dravot used to make us laugh in the evenings when all the people was cooking their dinners—cooking their dinners, and . . . what did they do then? They lit little fires with sparks that went into Dravot's beard, and we all laughed—fit to die. Little red fires they was, going into Dravot's big red beard—so funny." His eyes left mine and he smiled foolishly.

"You went as far as Jagdallak with that cara-

van," I said, at a venture, "after you had lit those fires. To Jagdallak, where you turned off to try to get into Kafiristan."

"No, we didn't neither. What are you talking about? We turned off before Jagdallak, because we heard the roads was good. But they wasn't good enough for our two camels—mine and Dravot's. When we left the caravan, Dravot took off all his clothes and mine too, and said we would be heathen, because the Kafirs didn't allow Mohammedans to talk to them. So we dressed betwixt and between, and such a sight as Daniel Dravot I never saw yet nor expect to see again. He burned half his beard, and slung a sheep-skin over his shoulder, and shaved his head into patterns. He shaved mine, too, and made me wear outrageous things to look like a heathen. That was in a most mountaineous country, and our camels couldn't go along any more because of the mountains. They were tall and black, and coming home I saw them fight like wild goats—there are lots of goats in Kafiristan. And these mountains, they never keep still, no more than goats. Always fighting they are, and don't let you sleep at night."

"Take some more whiskey," I said, very slowly. "What did you and Daniel Dravot do when the camels could go no further because of the rough roads that led into Kafiristan?"

"What did which do? There was a party called Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan that was

with Dravot. Shall I tell you about him? He died out there in the cold. Slap from the bridge fell old Peachey, turning and twisting in the air like a penny whirligig that you can sell to the Amir—No; they was two for three ha'-pence, those whirligigs, or I am much mistaken and woful sore. And then these camels were no use, and Peachey said to Dravot—'For the Lord's sake, let's get out of this before our heads are chopped off,' and with that they killed the camels all among the mountains, not having anything in particular to eat, but first they took off the boxes with the guns and the ammunition, till two men came along driving four mules. Dravot up and dances in front of them, singing—'Sell me four mules.' Says the first man—'If you are rich enough to buy, you are rich enough to rob;' but before ever he could put his hand to his knife, Dravot breaks his neck over his knee, and the other party runs away. So Carnehan loaded the mules with the rifles that was taken off the camels, and together we starts forward into those bitter cold mountaineous parts, and never a road broader than the back of your hand."

He paused for a moment, while I asked him if he could remember the nature of the country through which he had journeyed.

"I am telling you as straight as I can, but my head isn't as good as it might be. They drove nails through it to make me hear better how Dravot died. The country was mountaineous

and the mules were most contrary, and the inhabitants was dispersed and solitary. They went up and up, and down and down, and that other party, Carnehan, was imploring of Dravot not to sing and whistle so loud, for fear of bringing down the tremenjus avalanches. But Dravot says that if a King couldn't sing it wasn't worth being King, and whacked the mules over the rump, and never took no heed for ten cold days. We came to a big level valley all among the mountains, and the mules were near dead, so we killed them, not having anything in special for them or us to eat. We sat upon the boxes, and played odd and even with the cartridges that was jolted out.

"Then ten men with bows and arrows ran down that valley, chasing twenty men with bows and arrows, and the row was tremenjus. They was fair men—fairer than you or me—with yellow hair and remarkable well built. Says Dravot, unpacking the guns—'This is the beginning of the business. We'll fight for the ten men,' and with that he fires two rifles at the twenty men, and drops one of them at two hundred yards from the rock where we was sitting. The other men began to run, but Carnehan and Dravot sits on the boxes picking them off at all ranges, up and down the valley. Then we goes up to the ten men that had run across the snow too, and they fires a footy little arrow at us. Dravot he shoots above their heads and they all falls down

flat. Then he walks over and kicks them, and then he lifts them up and shakes hands all round to make them friendly like. He calls them and gives them the boxes to carry, and waves his hand for all the world as though he was King already. They takes the boxes and him across the valley and up the hill into a pine wood on the top, where there was half a dozen big stone idols. Dravot he goes to the biggest—a fellow they call Imbra—and lays a rifle and a cartridge at his feet, rubbing his nose respectful with his own nose, patting him on the head, and saluting in front of it. He turns round to the men and nods his head, and says—'That's all right. I'm in the know too, and all these old jim-jams are my friends.' Then he opens his mouth and points down it, and when the first man brings him food, he says—'No;' and when the second man brings him food, he says—'No;' but when one of the old priests and the boss of the village brings him food, he says—'Yes;' very haughty, and eats it slow. That was how we came to our first village, without any trouble, just as though we had tumbled from the skies. But we tumbled from one of those damned rope-bridges, you see, and you couldn't expect a man to laugh much after that."

"Take some more whiskey and go on," I said. "That was the first village you came into. How did you get to be King?"

"I wasn't King," said Carnehan. "Dravot he was the King, and a handsome man he looked

with the gold crown on his head and all. Him and the other party stayed in that village, and every morning Dravot sat by the side of old Imbra, and the people came and worshipped. That was Dravot's order. Then a lot of men came into the valley, and Carnehan and Dravot picks them off with the rifles before they knew where they was, and runs down into the valley and up again the other side, and finds another village, same as the first one, and the people all falls down flat on their faces, and Dravot says—'Now what is the trouble between you two villages?' and the people points to a woman, as fair as you or me, that was carried off, and Dravot takes her back to the first village and counts up the dead—eight there was. For each dead man Dravot pours a little milk on the ground and waves his arms like a whirligig and 'That's all right,' says he. Then he and Carnehan takes the big boss of each village by the arm and walks them down into the valley, and shows them how to scratch a line with a spear right down the valley, and gives each a sod of turf from both sides o' the line. Then all the people comes down and shouts like the devil and all, and Dravot says—'Go and dig the land, and be fruitful and multiply,' which they did, though they didn't understand. Then we asks the names of things in their lingo—bread and water and fire and idols and such, and Dravot leads the priest of each village up to the idol, and says he must sit there and

judge the people, and if anything goes wrong he is to be shot.

"Next week they was all turning up the land in the valley as quiet as bees and much prettier, and the priests heard all the complaints and told Dravot in dumb show what it was about. 'That's just the beginning,' says Dravot. 'They think we're Gods.' He and Carnehan picks out twenty good men and shows them how to click off a rifle, and form fours, and advance in line, and they was very pleased to do so, and clever to see the hang of it. Then he takes out his pipe and his baccy-pouch and leaves one at one village and one at the other, and off we two goes to see what was to be done in the next valley. That was all rock, and there was a little village there, and Carnehan says,—'Send 'em to the old valley to plant,' and takes 'em there and gives 'em some land that wasn't took before. They were a poor lot, and we blooded 'em with a kid before letting 'em into the new Kingdom. That was to impress the people, and then they settled down quiet, and Carnehan went back to Dravot, who had got into another valley, all snow and ice and most mountaineous. There was no people there, and the Army got afraid, so Dravot shoots one of them, and goes on till he finds some people in a village, and the Army explains that unless the people wants to be killed they had better not shoot their little matchlocks; for they had matchlocks. We makes friends with the priest and I stays there

alone with two of the Army, teaching the men how to drill, and a thundering big Chief comes across the snow with kettle-drums and horns twanging, because he heard there was a new God kicking about. Carnehan sights for the brown of the men half a mile across the snow and wings one of them. Then he sends a message to the Chief that, unless he wished to be killed, he must come and shake hands with me and leave his arms behind. The Chief comes alone first, and Carnehan shakes hands with him and whirls his arms about, same as Dravot used, and very much surprised that Chief was, and strokes my eyebrows. Then Carnehan goes alone to the Chief, and asks him in dumb show if he had an enemy he hated. 'I have,' says the Chief. So Carnehan weeds out the pick of his men, and sets the two of the Army to show them drill, and at the end of two weeks the men can manœuvre about as well as Volunteers. So he marches with the Chief to a great big plain on the top of a mountain, and the Chief's men rushes into a village and takes it; we three Martinis firing into the brown of the enemy. So we took that village too, and I gives the Chief a rag from my coat and says, 'Occupy till I come;' which was scriptural. By way of a reminder, when me and the Army was eighteen hundred yards away, I drops a bullet near him standing on the snow, and all the people falls flat on their faces. Then I sends a letter to Dravot, wherever he be by land or by sea."

At the risk of throwing the creature out of train I interrupted,—"How could you write a letter up yonder?"

"The letter?—Oh!—The letter! Keep looking at me between the eyes, please. It was a string-talk letter, that we'd learned the way of it from a blind beggar in the Punjab."

I remember that there had once come to the office a blind man with a knotted twig and a piece of string which he wound round the twig according to some cipher of his own. He could, after the lapse of days or hours, repeat the sentence which he had reeled up. He had reduced the alphabet to eleven primitive sounds; and tried to teach me his method, but failed.

"I sent that letter to Dravot," said Carnehan; "and told him to come back because this Kingdom was growing too big for me to handle, and then I struck for the first valley, to see how the priests were working. They called the village we took along with the Chief, Bashkai, and the first village we took, Er-Heb. The priests at Er-Heb was doing all right, but they had a lot of pending cases about land to show me, and some men from another village had been firing arrows at night. I went out and looked for that village and fired four rounds at it from a thousand yards. That used all the cartridges I cared to spend, and I waited for Dravot, who had been away two or three months, and I kept my people quiet.

"One morning I heard the devil's own noise

of drums and horns, and Dan Dravot marches down the hill with his Army and a tail of hundreds of men, and, which was the most amazing —a great gold crown on his head. 'My Gord, Carnehan,' says Daniel, 'this is a tremenjus business, and we've got the whole country as far as it's worth having. I am the son of Alexander by Queen Semiramis, and you're my younger brother and a God too! It's the biggest thing we've ever seen. I've been marching and fighting for six weeks with the Army, and every footy little village for fifty miles has come in rejoiceful; and more than that, I've got the key of the whole show, as you'll see, and I've got a crown for you! I told 'em to make two of 'em at a place called Shu, where the gold lies in the rock like suet in mutton. Gold I've seen, and turquoise I've kicked out of the cliffs, and there's garnets in the sands of the river, and here's a chunk of amber that a man brought me. Call up all the priests and, here, take your crown.'

"One of the men opens a black hair bag and I slips the crown on. It was too small and too heavy, but I wore it for the glory. Hammered gold it was—five pound weight, like a hoop of a barrel.

" 'Peachey,' says Dravot, 'we don't want to fight no more. The Craft's the trick, so help me!" and he brings forward that same Chief that I left at Bashkai—Billy Fish we called him afterward, because he was so like Billy Fish that drove

the big tank-engine at Mach on the Bolan in the old days. 'Shake hands with him,' says Dravot, and I shook hands and nearly dropped, for Billy Fish gave me the Grip. I said nothing, but tried him with the Fellow Craft Grip. He answers, all right, and I tried the Master's Grip, but that was a slip. 'A Fellow Craft he is!' I says to Dan. 'Does he know the word?' 'He does,' says Dan, 'and all the priests know. It's a miracle! The Chiefs and the priests can work a Fellow Craft Lodge in a way that's very like ours, and they've cut the marks on the rocks, but they don't know the Third Degree, and they've come to find out. It's Gord's Truth. I've known these long years that the Afghans knew up to the Fellow Craft Degree, but this is a miracle. A God and a Grand-Master of the Craft am I, and a Lodge in the Third Degree I will open, and we'll raise the head priests and the Chief's of the villages.'

" 'It's against all the law,' I says, 'holding a Lodge without warrant from any one; and we never held office in any Lodge.'

" 'It's a master-stroke of policy,' says Dravot. 'It means running the country as easy as a four-wheeled bogy on a down grade. We can't stop to inquire now, or they'll turn against us. I've forty Chiefs at my heel, and passed and raised according to their merit they shall be. Billet these men on the villages and see that we run up a Lodge of some kind. The temple of Imbra will do for the Lodge-room. The women must make

aprons as you show them. I'll hold a levee of Chiefs to-night and Lodge to-morrow.'

"I was fair run off my legs, but I wasn't such a fool as not to see what a pull this Craft business gave us. I showed the priests' families how to make aprons of the degrees, but for Dravot's apron the blue border and marks was made of turquoise lumps on white hide, not cloth. We took a great square stone in the temple for the Master's chair, and little stones for the officers' chairs, and painted the black pavement with white squares, and did what we could to make things regular.

"At the levee which was held that night on the hillside with big bonfires, Dravot gives out that him and me were Gods and sons of Alexander, and Past Grand-Masters in the Craft, and was come to make Kafiristan a country where every man should eat in peace and drink in quiet, and specially obey us. Then the Chiefs come round to shake hands, and they was so hairy and white and fair it was just shaking hands with old friends. We gave them names acording as they was like men we had known in India—Billy Fish, Holly Wilworth, Pikky Kergan that was Bazar-master when I was at Mhow, and so on and so on.

"*The* most amazing miracle was at Lodge next night. One of the old priests was watching us continuous, and I felt uneasy, for I knew we'd have to fudge the Ritual, and I didn't know what the men knew. The old priest was a stranger come in from beyond the village of Bashkai. The

minute Dravot puts on the Master's apron that the girls had made for him, the priest fetches a whoop and a howl, and tries to overturn the stone that Dravot was sitting on. 'It's all up now,' I says. 'That comes of meddling with the Craft without warrant!' Dravot never winked an eye, not when ten priests took and tilted over the Grand-Master's chair—which was to say the stone of Imbra. The priest begins rubbing the bottom end of it to clear away the black dirt, and presently he shows all the other priests the Master's Mark, same as was on Dravot's apron, cut into the stone. Not even the priests of the temple of Imbra knew it was there. The old chap falls flat on his face at Dravot's feet and kisses 'em. 'Luck again,' says Dravot, across the Lodge to me, 'they say it's the missing Mark that no one could understand the why of. We're more than safe now.' Then he bangs the butt of his gun for a gavel and says:—'By virtue of the authority vested in me by my own right hand and the help of Peachey, I declare myself Grand-Master of all Freemasonry in Kafiristan in this the Mother Lodge o' the country, and King of Kafiristan equally with Peachey!' At that he puts on his crown and I puts on mine—I was doing Senior Warden—and we opens the Lodge in most ample form. It was a amazing miracle! The priests moved in Lodge through the first two degrees almost without telling, as if the memory was coming back to them. After that, Peachey and

Dravot raised such as was worthy—high priests and Chiefs of far-off villages. Billy Fish was the first, and I can tell you we scared the soul out of him. It was not in any way according to Ritual, but it served our turn. We didn't raise more than ten of the biggest men, because we didn't want to make the Degree common. And they was clamoring to be raised.

"'In another six months,' says Dravot, 'we'll hold another Communication and see how you are working.' Then he asks them about their villages, and learns that they was fighting one against the other and were fair sick and tired of it. And when they wasn't doing that they was fighting with the Mohammedans. 'You can fight those when they come into our country,' says Dravot. 'Tell off every tenth man of your tribes for a Frontier guard, and send two hundred at a time to this valley to be drilled. Nobody is going to be shot or speared any more so long as he does well, and I know that you won't cheat me because you're white people—sons of Alexander—and not like common, black Mohammedans. You are *my* people and by God,' says he, running off into English at the end—'I'll make a damned fine Nation of you, or I'll die in the making!'

"I can't tell all we did for the next six months because Dravot did a lot I couldn't see the hang off, and he learned their lingo in a way I never could. My work was to help the people plough,

and now and again go out with some of the Army and see what the other villages were doing, and make 'em throw rope-bridges across the ravines which cut up the country horrid. Dravot was very kind to me, but when he walked up and down in the pine wood pulling that bloody red beard of his with both fists I knew he was thinking plans I could not advise him about, and I just waited for orders.

"But Dravot never showed me disrespect before the people. They were afraid of me and the Army, but they loved Dan. He was the best of friends with the priests and the Chiefs; but any one could come across the hills with a complaint and Dravot would hear him out fair, and call four priests together and say what was to be done. He used to call in Billy Fish from Bashkai, and Pikky Kergan from Shu, and an old Chief we called Kafuzelum—it was like enough to his real name—and hold councils with 'em when there was any fighting to be done in small villages. That was his Council of War, and the four priests of Bashkai, Shu, Khawak, and Madora was his Privy Council. Between the lot of 'em they sent me, with forty men and twenty rifles, and sixty men carrying turquoises, into the Ghorband country to buy those hand-made Martini rifles, that come out of the Amir's workshops at Kabul, from one of the Amir's Herati regiments that would have sold the very teeth out of their mouths for turquoises.

"I stayed in Ghorband a month, and gave the Governor there the pick of my baskets for hush-money, and bribed the Colonel of the regiment some more, and, between the two and the tribes-people, we got more than a hundred hand-made Martinis, a hundred good Kohat Jezails that'll throw to six hundred yards, and forty man-loads of very bad ammunition for the rifles. I came back with what I had, and distributed 'em among the men that the Chiefs sent to me to drill. Dravot was too busy to attend to those things, but the old Army that we first made helped me, and we turned out five hundred men that could drill, and two hundred that knew how to hold arms pretty straight.

"Even those cork-screwed, hand-made guns was a miracle to them. Dravot talked big about powder-shops and factories, walking up and down in the pine wood when the winter was coming on.

" 'I won't make a Nation,' says he. 'I'll make an Empire! These men aren't niggers; they're English! Look at their eyes—look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they've grown to be English. I'll take a census in the spring if the priests don't get frightened. There must be a fair two million of 'em in these hills. The villages are full o' little children. Two million people—two hundred and fifty thousand

fighting men—and all English! They only want the rifles and a little drilling. Two hundred and fifty thousand men, ready to cut in on Russia's right flank when she tries for India! Peachey, man,' he says, chewing his beard in great hunks, 'we shall be Emperors—Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us. I'll treat with the Viceroy on equal terms. I'll ask him to send me twelve picked English—twelve that I know of—to help us govern a bit. There's Mackray, Sergeant-pensioner at Segowli—many's the good dinner he's given me, and his wife a pair of trousers. There's Donkin, the Warder of Tounghoo Jail; there's hundreds that I could lay my hand on if I was in India. The Viceroy shall do it for me. I'll send a man through in the spring for those men, and I'll write for a dispensation from the Grand-Lodge for what I've done as Grand-Master. That—and all the Sniders that'll be thrown out when the native troops in India take up the Martini. They'll be worn smooth, but they'll do for fighting in these hills. Twelve English, a hundred thousand Sniders run through the Amir's country in driblets—I'd be content with twenty thousand in one year—and we'd be an Empire. When everything was shipshape, I'd hand over the crown—this crown I'm wearing now—to Queen Victoria on my knees, and she'd say: "Rise up, Sir Daniel Dravot." Oh, it's big! It's big, I tell you! But there's so much to be done in every

place—Bashkai, Khawak, Shu, and everywhere else.'

" 'What is it?' I says. 'There are no more men coming in to be drilled this autumn. Look at those fat, black clouds. They're bringing the snow.'

" 'It isn't that,' says Daniel, putting his hand very hard on my shoulder; 'and I don't wish to say anything that's against you, for no other living man would have followed me and made me what I am as you have done. You're a first-class Commander-in-Chief, and the people know you; but—it's a big country, and somehow you can't help me, Peachey, in the way I want to be helped.'

" 'Go to your blasted priests, then!' I said, and I was sorry when I made that remark, but it did hurt me sore to find Daniel talking so superior when I'd drilled all the men, and done all he told me.

" 'Don't let's quarrel, Peachey,' says Daniel, without cursing. 'You're a King, too, and the half of this Kingdom is yours; but can't you see, Peachey, we want cleverer men than us now—three or four of 'em, that we can scatter about for our Deputies. It's a hugeous great State, and I can't always tell the right thing to do, and I haven't time for all I want to do, and here's the winter coming on and all.' He put half his beard into his mouth, and it was as red as the gold of his crown.

" 'I'm sorry, Daniel,' says I. 'I've done all I

could. I've drilled the men and shown the people how to stack their oats better; and I've brought in those tinware rifles from Ghorband—but I know what you're driving at. I take it Kings always feel oppressed that way.'

"'There's another thing too,' says Dravot, walking up and down. 'The winter's coming and these people won't be giving much trouble and if they do we can't move about. I want a wife.'

"'For Gord's sake leave the women alone!' I says. 'We've both got all the work we can, though I *am* a fool. Remember the Contrack, and keep clear o' women.'

"'The Contrack only lasted till such time as we was Kings; and Kings we have been these months past,' says Dravot, weighing his crown in his hand. 'You go get a wife too, Peachey—a nice, strappin', plump girl that'll keep you warm in the winter. They're prettier than English girls, and we can take the pick of 'em. Boil 'em once or twice in hot water, and they'll come as fair as chicken and ham.'

"'Don't tempt me!' I says. 'I will not have any dealings with a woman not till we are a dam' side more settled than we are now. I've been doing the work o' two men, and you've been doing the work o' three. Let's lie off a bit, and see if we can get some better tobacco from Afghan country and run in some good liquor; but no women.'

"'Who's talking o' *women?*' says Dravot. 'I

said *wife*—a Queen to breed a King's son for the King. A Queen out of the strongest tribe, that'll make them your blood-brothers, and that'll lie by your side and tell you all the people thinks about you and their own affairs. That's what I want.'

" 'Do you remember that Bengali woman I kept at Mogul Serai when I was a plate-layer?' says I. 'A fat lot o' good she was to me. She taught me the lingo and one or two other things; but what happened? She ran away with the Station-master's servant and half my month's pay. Then she turned up at Dadur Junction in tow of a half-caste, and had the impidence to say I was her husband—all among the drivers in the running-shed!'

" 'We've done with that,' says Dravot. 'These women are whiter than you or me, and a Queen I will have for the winter months.'

" 'For the last time o' asking, Dan, do *not,*' I says. 'It'll only bring us harm. The Bible says that Kings ain't to waste their strength on women, 'specially when they've got a new raw Kingdom to work over.'

" 'For the last time of answering, I will,' said Dravot, and he went away through the pine-trees looking like a big red devil. The low sun hit his crown and beard on one side and the two blazed like hot coals.

"But getting a wife was not as easy as Dan thought. He put it before the Council, and there was no answer till Billy Fish said that he'd better

ask the girls. Dravot damned them all round. 'What's wrong with me?' he shouts, standing by the idol Imbra. 'Am I a dog or am I not enough of a man for your wenches? Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country? Who stopped the last Afghan raid?' It was me really, but Dravot was too angry to remember. 'Who brought your guns? Who repaired the bridges? Who's the Grand-Master of the sign cut in the stone?' and he thumped his hand on the block that he used to sit on in Lodge, and at Council, which opened like Lodge always. Billy Fish said nothing, and no more did the others. 'Keep your hair on, Dan,' said I; 'and ask the girls. That's how it's done at Home, and these people are quite English.'

" 'The marriage of the King is a matter of State,' says Dan, in a white-hot rage, for he could feel, I hope, that he was going against his better mind. He walked out of the Council-room, and the others sat still, looking at the ground.

" 'Billy Fish,' says I to the Chief of Bashkai, 'what's the difficulty here? A straight answer to a true friend.' 'You know,' says Billy Fish. 'How should a man tell you who know everything? How can daughters of men marry Gods or Devils? It's not proper.'

"I remembered something like that in the Bible; but if, after seeing us as long as they had, they still believed we were Gods, it wasn't for me to undeceive them.

" 'A God can do anything,' says I. 'If the King is fond of a girl he'll not let her die.' 'She'll have to,' said Billy Fish. 'There are all sorts of Gods and Devils in these mountains, and now and again a girl marries one of them and isn't seen any more. Besides, you two know the Mark cut in the stone. Only the Gods know that. We thought you were men till you showed the sign of the Master.'

"I wished then that we had explained about the loss of the genuine secrets of a Master-Mason at the first go-off; but I said nothing. All that night there was a blowing of horns in a little dark temple half-way down the hill, and I heard a girl crying fit to die. One of the priests told us that she was being prepared to marry the King.

" 'I'll have no nonsense of that kind,' says Dan. 'I don't want to interfere with your customs, but I'll take my own wife.' 'The girl's a little bit afraid,' says the priest. 'She thinks she's going to die, and they are a-heartening of her up down in the temple.'

" 'Hearten her very tender, then,' says Dravot, 'or I'll hearten you with the butt of a gun so that you'll never want to be heartened again.' He licked his lips, did Dan, and stayed up walking about more than half the night, thinking of the wife that he was going to get in the morning. I wasn't any means comfortable, for I knew that dealings with a woman in foreign parts, though you was a crowned King twenty times over, could

not but be risky. I got up very early in the morning while Dravot was asleep, and I saw the priests talking together in whispers, and the Chiefs talking together too, and they looked at me out of the corners of their eyes.

" 'What is up, Fish?' I says to the Bashkai man, who was wrapped up in his furs and looking splendid to behold.

" 'I can't rightly say,' says he; 'but if you can induce the King to drop all this nonsense about marriage, you'll be doing him and me and yourself a great service.'

" 'That I do believe,' says I. 'But sure, you know, Billy, as well as me, having fought against and for us, that the King and me are nothing more than two of the finest men that God Almighty ever made. Nothing more, I do assure you.'

" 'That may be,' says Billy Fish, 'and yet I should be sorry if it was.' He sinks his head upon his great fur cloak for a minute and thinks. 'King,' says he, 'be you man or God or Devil, I'll stick by you to-day. I have twenty of my men with me, and they will follow me. We'll go to Bashkai until the storm blows over.'

"A little snow had fallen in the night, and everything was white except the greasy fat clouds that blew down and down from the north. Dravot came out with his crown on his head, swinging his arms and stamping his feet, and looking more pleased than Punch.

" 'For the last time, drop it, Dan,' says I, in a whisper. 'Billy Fish here says that there will be a row.'

" 'A row among my people!' says Dravot. 'Not much. Peachey, you're a fool not to get a wife too. Where's the girl?' says he, with a voice as loud as the braying of a jackass. 'Call up all the Chiefs and priests, and let the Emperor see if his wife suits him.'

"There was no need to call any one. They were all there leaning on their guns and spears round the clearing in the centre of the pine wood. A deputation of priests went down to the little temple to bring up the girl, and the horns blew up fit to wake the dead. Billy Fish saunters round and gets as close to Daniel as he could, and behind him stood his twenty men with matchlocks. Not a man of them under six feet. I was next to Dravot, and behind me was twenty men of the regular Army. Up comes the girl, and a strapping wench she was, covered with silver and turquoises, but white as death, and looking back every minute at the priests.

" 'She'll do,' said Dan, looking her over. 'What's to be afraid of, lass? Come and kiss me.' He puts his arm round her. She shuts her eyes, gives a bit of a squeak, and down goes her face in the side of Dan's flaming red beard.

" 'The slut's bitten me!' says he, clapping his hand to his neck, and, sure enough, his hand was red with blood. Billy Fish and two of his match-

lock-men catches hold of Dan by the shoulders and drags him into the Bashkai lot, while the priests howl in their lingo — 'Neither God nor Devil, but a man!' I was all taken aback, for a priest cut at me in front, and the Army behind began firing into the Bashkai men.

" 'God A-mighty!' says Dan. 'What is the meaning o' this?'.

" 'Come back! Come away!' says Billy Fish. 'Ruin and Mutiny is the matter. We'll break for Bashkai if we can.'

"I tried to give some sort of orders to my men —the men o' the regular Army—but it was no use, so I fired into the brown of 'em with an English Martini and drilled three beggars in a line. The valley was full of shouting, howling creatures, and every soul was shrieking, 'Not a God nor a Devil, but only a man!' The Bashkai troops stuck to Billy Fish all they were worth, but their matchlocks wasn't half as good as the Kabul breech-loaders, and four of them dropped. Dan was bellowing like a bull, for he was very wrathy; and Billy Fish had a hard job to prevent him running out at the crowd.

" 'We can't stand,' says Billy Fish. 'Make a run for it down the valley! The whole place is against us.' The matchlock-men ran, and we went down the valley in spite of Dravot's protestations. He was swearing horribly and crying out that he was a King. The priests rolled great stones on us, and the regular Army fired

hard, and there wasn't more than six men, not counting Dan, Billy Fish, and Me, that came down to the bottom of the valley alive.

"Then they stopped firing and the horns in the temple blew again. 'Come away—for Gord's sake come away!' says Billy Fish. 'They'll send runners out to all the villages before ever we get to Bashkai. I can protect you there, but I can't do anything now.'

"My own notion is that Dan began to go mad in his head from that hour. He stared up and down like a stuck pig. Then he was all for walking back alone and killing the priests with his bare hands; which he could have done. 'An Emperor am I,' says Daniel, 'and next year I shall be a Knight of the Queen.'

" 'All right, Dan,' says I; 'but come along now while there's time.'

" 'It's your fault,' says he, 'for not looking after your Army better. There was mutiny in the midst and you didn't know—you damned engine-driving, plate-laying, missionary's-pass-hunting hound!' He sat upon a rock and called me every foul name he could lay tongue to. I was too heart-sick to care, though it was all his foolishness that brought the smash.

" 'I'm sorry, Dan,' says I, 'but there's no accounting for natives. This business is our Fifty-Seven. Maybe we'll make something out of it yet, when we've got to Bashkai.'

" 'Let's get to Bashkai, then,' says Dan, 'and,

by God, when I come back here again I'll sweep the valley so there isn't a bug in a blanket left!'

"We walked all that day, and all that night Dan was stumping up and down on the snow, chewing his beard and muttering to himself.

" 'There's no hope o' getting clear,' said Billy Fish. 'The priests will have sent runners to the villages to say that you are only men. Why didn't you stick on as Gods till things was more settled? I'm a dead man,' says Billy Fish, and he throws himself down on the snow and begins to pray to his Gods.

"Next morning we was in a cruel bad country —all up and down, no level ground at all, and no food either. The six Bashkai men looked at Billy Fish hungry-wise as if they wanted to ask something, but they said never a word. At noon we came to the top of a flat mountain all covered with snow, and when we climbed up into it, behold, there was an Army in position waiting in the middle!

" 'The runners have been very quick,' says Billy Fish, with a little bit of a laugh. 'They are waiting for us.'

"Three or four men began to fire from the enemy's side, and a chance shot took Daniel in the calf of the leg. That brought him to his senses. He looks across the snow at the Army, and sees the rifles that we had brought into the country.

" 'We're done for,' says he. 'They are Eng-

lishmen, these people—and it's my blasted nonsense that has brought you to this. Get back, Billy Fish, and take your men away; you've done what you could, and now cut for it. Carnehan,' says he, 'shake hands with me and go along with Billy. Maybe they won't kill you. I'll go and meet 'em alone. It's me that did it. Me, the King!'

"'Go!' says I. 'Go to Hell, Dan. I'm with you here. Billy Fish, you clear out, and we two will meet those folk.'

"'I'm a Chief,' says Billy Fish, quite quiet. 'I stay with you. My men can go.'

"The Bashkai fellows didn't wait for a second word, but ran off, and Dan and Me and Billy Fish walked across to where the drums were drumming and the horns were horning. It was cold—awful cold. I've got that cold in the back of my head now. There's a lump of it there."

The punkah-coolies had gone to sleep. Two kerosene lamps were blazing in the office, and the perspiration poured down my face and splashed on the blotter as I leaned forward. Carnehan was shivering, and I feared that his mind might go. I wiped my face, took a fresh grip of the piteously mangled hands, and said: "What happened after that?"

The momentary shift of my eyes had broken the clear current.

"What was you pleased to say?" whined Carnehan. "They took them without any sound.

Not a little whisper all along the snow, not though the King knocked down the first man that set hand on him—not though old Peachey fired his last cartridge into the brown of 'em. Not a single solitary sound did those swines make. They just closed up tight, and I tell you their furs stunk. There was a man called Billy Fish, a good friend of us all, and they cut his throat, Sir, then and there, like a pig; and the King kicks up the bloody snow and says:—'We've had a dashed fine run for our money. What's coming next? But Peachey, Peachey Taliaferro, I tell you, Sir, in confidence as betwixt two friends, he lost his head, Sir. No, he didn't neither. The King lost his head, so he did, all along o' one of those cunning rope-bridges. Kindly let me have the paper-cutter, Sir. It tilted this way. They marched him a mile across that snow to a rope-bridge over a ravine with a river at the bottom. You may have seen such. They prodded him behind like an ox. 'Damn your eyes!' says the King. 'D'you suppose I can't die like a gentleman?' He turns to Peachey—Peachey that was crying like a child. 'I've brought you to this, Peachey,' says he. 'Brought you out of your happy life to be killed in Kafiristan, where you was late Commander-in-Chief of the Emperor's forces. Say you forgive me, Peachey.' 'I do,' says Peachey. Fully and freely do I forgive you, Dan.' 'Shake hands, Peachey,' says he. 'I'm going now.' Out he goes, looking neither right nor left, and when he

was plumb in the middle of those dizzy dancing ropes, 'Cut, you beggars,' he shouts; and they cut, and old Dan fell, turning round and round and round twenty thousand miles, for he took half an hour to fall till he struck the water, and I could see his body caught on a rock with the gold crown close beside.

"But do you know what they did to Peachey between two pine trees? They crucified him, Sir, as Peachey's hand will show. They used wooden pegs for his hands and his feet; and he didn't die. He hung there and screamed, and they took him down next day, and said it was a miracle that he wasn't dead. They took him down—poor old Peachey that hadn't done them any harm—that hadn't done them any. . . ."

He rocked to and fro and wept bitterly, wiping his eyes with the back of his scarred hands and moaning like a child for some ten minutes.

"They was cruel enough to feed him up in the temple, because they said he was more of a God than old Daniel that was a man. Then they turned him out on the snow, and told him to go home, and Peachey came home in about a year, begging along the roads quite safe; for Daniel Dravot he walked before and said:—'Come along, Peachey. It's a big thing we're doing.' The mountains they danced at night, and the mountains they tried to fall on Peachey's head, but Dan he held up his hand, and Peachey came along bent double. He never let go of Dan's

hand, and he never let go of Dan's head. They gave it to him as a present in the temple, to remind him not to come again, and though the crown was pure gold, and Peachey was starving, never would Peachey sell the same. You knew Dravot, Sir! You knew Right Worshipful Brother Dravot! Look at him now!"

He fumbled in the mass of rags round his bent waist; brought out a black horsehair bag embroidered with silver thread; and shook therefrom on to my table—the dried, withered head of Daniel Dravot! The morning sun that had long been paling the lamps struck the red beard and blind, sunken eyes; struck, too, a heavy circlet of gold studded with raw turquoises, that Carnehan placed tenderly on the battered temples.

"You behold now," said Carnehan, "the Emperor in his habit as he lived—the King of Kafiristan with his crown upon his head. Poor old Daniel that was a monarch once!"

I shuddered, for, in spite of defacements manifold, I recognized the head of the man of Marwar Junction. Carnehan rose to go. I attempted to stop him. He was not fit to walk abroad. "Let me take away the whiskey, and give me a little money," he gasped. "I was a King once. I'll go to the Deputy Commissioner and ask to set in the Poorhouse till I get my health. No, thank you, I can't wait till you get a carriage for me. I've urgent private affairs—in the south—at Marwar."

He shambled out of the office and departed in the direction of the Deputy Commissioner's house. That day at noon I had occasion to go down the blinding hot Mall, and I saw a crooked man crawling along the white dust of the roadside, his hat in his hand, quavering dolorously after the fashion of street-singers at Home. There was not a soul in sight, and he was out of all possible earshot of the houses. And he sang through his nose, turning his head from right to left:

> "The Son of Man goes forth to war,
> A golden crown to gain;
> His blood-red banner streams afar—
> Who follows in his train?"

I waited to hear no more, but put the poor wretch into my carriage and drove him off to the nearest missionary for eventual transfer to the Asylum. He repeated the hymn twice while he was with me, whom he did not in the least recognize, and I left him singing it to the missionary.

Two days later I inquired after his welfare.

"He was admitted suffering from sunstroke. He died early yesterday morning," said the Superintendent. "Is it true that he was half an hour bareheaded in the sun at midday?"

"Yes," said I, "but do you happen to know if he had anything upon him by any chance when he died?"

"Not to my knowledge," said the Superintendent.

And there the matter rests.